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**THE RADIO DETECTIVES  
IN THE JUNGLE**

By A. HYATT VERRILL

THE RADIO DETECTIVES  
THE RADIO DETECTIVES UNDER  
THE SEA

THE RADIO DETECTIVES  
SOUTHWARD BOUND

THE RADIO DETECTIVES IN THE  
JUNGLE

THE DEEP SEA HUNTERS  
THE BOOK OF THE MOTOR BOAT  
ISLES OF SPICE AND PALM

# THE RADIO DETECTIVES IN THE JUNGLE

BY

*Spence*  
A. HYATT VERRILL

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UNDER THE SEA," "THE RADIO DETECTIVES  
SOUTHWARD BOUND," ETC.



D. APPLETON AND COMPANY  
NEW YORK :: 1922 :: LONDON

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

OCT - 6 '22  
©C1A686135

no 1

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# RADIO DETECTIVES IN THE JUNGLE

## CHAPTER I

### STRANGE PLACES

**A** HURRICANE had swept through the West Indies leaving death and destruction in its path and wrecking scores of vessels, uprooting trees, stripping the tops from palms, destroying crops and blowing down the flimsy native houses.

Now that it was over and there was no danger of its return those ships that had escaped the storm within snug harbors began to creep forth to resume their interrupted voyages. Some were uninjured. Others had rigging or deck fittings carried away, while some were so badly crippled that they limped as rapidly as possible towards the nearest dry dock for repairs.

Among them was a lean gray destroyer which

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slipped out of Coral Bay at St. John and headed her sharp prow southward. That she had borne the brunt of the terrific gale was evident, for of her four funnels only two were standing, her decks had been swept bare, fathoms of her railings had been carried away and from half way up her military mast she was white with encrusted salt. But she had received no vital injury. From her two remaining funnels dense volumes of smoke were pouring, a busy crowd of bluejackets labored like ants at repairing the damages to superstructure and fittings and, despite the buffeting she had received and the fact that half her boilers were out of commission until the funnels could be replaced, she slid through the oily seas at a twenty-knot clip.

To those who have followed the Radio Detectives through their previous adventures the group upon the crippled destroyer's decks will need no introduction. There was the trim, spick-and-span Commander Disbrow, the deep-sea diver, Rawlins, Mr. Pauling and his friend Mr. Henderson and the two boys, Tom Pauling and his chum Frank.

But for the benefit of those who now meet the Radio Detectives for the first time a few words of explanation will be needed.



## STRANGE PLACES

Months before the story opens, Tom Pauling and Frank had discovered a most astounding plot by means of their radio telephones and thereby enabled Tom's father and his associate, Mr. Henderson, who were federal officers in the Secret Service, to make prisoners of a number of members of an international gang of scoundrels whose activities included the distribution of Bolshevist literature, the destruction of property, smuggling contraband liquor into the United States and conducting a widespread series of hold-ups, robberies and other crimes. Through confessions and other evidence Mr. Pauling and Mr. Henderson had learned that the arch criminal or master mind of the plot was hiding in a secret lair in the West Indies which—after a series of thrilling adventures on the part of the two boys and their companions, including Rawlins and Sam, a Bahaman negro—had been located, only to find that the leader of the criminals had slipped through the net set for him.

Then, influenced by a "hunch" on Rawlins' part, Mr. Pauling and his companions had followed a tramp steamer, of which they were suspicious, to St. Thomas. Although there was no evidence conclusive enough to warrant holding the tramp, suspicion pointed to

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the fact that the leader of the gang of criminals was somewhere in the vicinity. Owing to mysterious radio messages, the party chartered a schooner and went to the neighboring island of St. John.

Here they met a Dutch naturalist named Van Brunt who was dealing with the "reds." Rawlins, spying on him, was held up and narrowly escaped death at the hands of a man whom he recognized as the master criminal they were seeking. Later, this man was found dead and proved to be a person disguised to impersonate the real leader, while Van Brunt visited the schooner and convinced Mr. Pauling and Mr. Henderson that he was innocent and knew nothing of the "red's " activities.

Becoming friendly with the boys, the Dutch scientist took them on a trip into the bush and while they were in a huge cave, deserted them. Soon afterwards a severe hurricane swept the island, imprisoning the two boys within the cavern by a tree falling across the entrance. In the meantime the other members of the party were compelled to seek refuge from the hurricane in the village on shore and were amazed to see the tramp steamer entering the harbor to escape the storm. As soon as the gale was over a searching party started out to find the missing boys

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and discovered that Van Brunt's house had been destroyed by lightning.

While they were hunting for the boys, Tom and Frank had been made prisoners by a red-bearded man whom they knew was one of the gang. They had been placed on a submarine where Van Brunt confronted them, admitting he was a member of the "reds" and had purposely betrayed the boys. From the submarine they were taken to a locked cabin on a vessel and later were rescued in a most astounding manner by Sam, the Bahaman, who also killed Van Brunt. During their imprisonment the boys had overheard a plot to capture the other members of the party by means of a decoy letter and reaching their friends safely Tom and Frank related their tale in time to save the others from falling into the scoundrels' trap. Soon afterwards a destroyer, which was in constant touch with the schooner by radio, arrived in response to Mr. Pauling's summons. The tramp, in a last desperate attempt to escape, tried to run down the schooner but failed owing to Rawlins' quick wit. Then, turning, the tramp endeavored to leave the harbor by a narrow entrance, but was sunk by a shot from the destroyer's guns.

From the boys' descriptions and Sam's discoveries

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the Americans learned that the tramp was a "mother ship" for the submarine with a huge cradle or opening in the hull wherein the underseas boat could rest and be carried from place to place. But although a search was made of the wrecked tramp no trace of either the submarine or of bodies could be found. Mr. Pauling and the others felt convinced, however, that the leader of the gang was still at large and while discussing this matter their attention was drawn to a seaplane which they decided was a United States government machine sent from Porto Rico or St. Thomas to learn the cause of the explosion.

After the aircraft had disappeared the party returned to the destroyer and to their amazement were given a radio message from the aviator which Mr. Pauling recognized as coming from the arch criminal whom they were seeking.

But although their quarry had once more escaped them and had taken to the air, Rawlins insisted they would yet capture him and pointed out that the seaplane must descend and that when it did they should be on hand.

Although it seemed but a slim chance, still the diver's hunches had invariably proved so reliable that Mr. Pauling had at once decided to take Rawlins'

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advice and, transferring himself and his party to the partially disabled destroyer, had at once started forth to search the neighboring islands for the aircraft which had last been seen flying southward.

And as the lean gray craft slipped out of the shelter of Coral Bay and felt the heave of the Caribbean sea, Rawlins was speaking. "Airplanes aren't so common down here that they can fly over the islands without being noticed," he asserted. "If we stop in at them here and there we ought to be able to trail him. He'd have to head for some place and by finding out where he's been seen we can get his direction. I'll bet he's got some hang-out down here. Of course, he could land on the water, but it would have to be in the lee of an island even if he was going to be picked up by a ship."

"Or the submarine," put in Mr. Pauling. "Don't forget that the chances are the sub escaped and is to meet him."

"Yes, but he can't land on a sub and he couldn't have started off from it. No, he's either got some ship or a secret landing place and hangar for his plane on shore. Besides, if he tries sending messages the boys can pick them up."

"To my mind," declared Mr. Henderson. "It is



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like hunting for the proverbial needle in the haystack. There are a score and more of islands—to say nothing of cays—and although he started south we have no means of knowing how soon he may have shifted his course. Why, even now, he may be over in Santo Domingo, Cuba or Tortuga or he may have turned east to St. Barts or Barbuda. If we went to every island we would be here for the next year.”

“I’ll say we would!” laughed Rawlins. “But we don’t need to. Once we pick up his trail and know his course it’ll be easy. A fellow can’t fly far in any direction without being in sight of an island and if we lose him we can easily find his trail again by calling at an island or two.”

“Sounds easy, I admit,” remarked Mr. Henderson rather sarcastically. “But what is to prevent him from going straight across to South America for example? Then we’d have a nice job trying to find where he landed—I suppose we’d have to hunt the entire northern coast of the continent.”

“I expect you’re jollying me a bit,” replied the diver, “but honest Injun you know he couldn’t make a nonstop flight to South America from here and if he took a course for there our job would be all the easier. There are only a few islands between here

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and South America, in a direct line you know. I think the best place to ask will be Statia or St. Croix. Then, if they haven't seen or heard him, we can swing to the east to St. Kitts or St. Barts."

"I'm backing your hunch you know, Rawlins," asserted Mr. Pauling, "and if you say St. Croix first, St. Croix it is. We're outside now and we'd better give Commander Disbrow his course."

"Well, I guess we'll make it Statia first," replied Rawlins after a moment's thought. It's the nearest and in nearly a direct line with the course he took. Besides, the Dutch captain of the tramp may still be in the hospital there. If he is we can see him and maybe pump some information from him. Perhaps, if he knows his ship's gone to Davy Jones and the others have skedaddled he'll come across with a confession to clear his own skirts."

"Yes, that's a good scheme," agreed Mr. Pauling. "We'll make Statia first then."

The two boys had thought St. Thomas and St. John fascinating and beautiful, but as the towering volcanic cone of St. Eustatius or "Statia" as it is more often called, rose above the sea with the far reaching, rich green hills and cloud-piercing, frowning heights of St. Kitts to the east, they could only gaze in rapt

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admiration and declared they had never seen anything so wonderful or beautiful.

"Wait until you see the other islands," said Rawlins, laughing at the boys' excited exclamations of delight. "Why, St. Kitts over there isn't anything compared to Dominica or Martinique and as for Statia—well of course it looks high and it's striking because it's small and the cone is so perfect in shape, but it's no bigger than little St. John and it would be only a hill on Guadeloupe or Dominica."

"Gee, I hope the old seaplane went everywhere so we can see all the islands," declared Tom. "It's a shame we are down here and won't see those you talk about."

"Maybe we will," said the diver. "At any rate, we're bound to see some of them, but look over there to the west. See that big cone sticking up to the right of Statia? Well that's the strangest island in the West Indies if not in the world. It's Saba."

"But no one lives there!" complained Frank, who was studying the conical mass of rock rising abruptly for a thousand feet above the sea.

"Don't they!" exclaimed Rawlins. "I'll say they do! But you can't see 'em or their houses from the sea. Saba's just a big volcano—dead of course.



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The town's in the crater—about eight hundred feet above the sea. It's called 'Bottom.' The people are Dutch and speak English and if you visited 'em you'd have to climb a stairway cut in the rocks with eight hundred steps. And I'll bet my boots to a herring you can't guess what the folks who live up in that crater do for a living."

"No, but I should think they might make balloons or airplanes," replied Tom.

"'Twould be more appropriate," agreed Rawlins, "but instead they make boats! Carry the lumber up that stairway—it's called 'The Ladder'—build the boats in the crater and lower 'em over the mountain side just as if they were launching 'em from a ship.

"Oh, you're just kidding us!" declared Tom. "That's too big a yarn!"

"True, nevertheless," his father, who had drawn near, assured him. "I've heard of it before."

"'Course it's true!" avowed the diver. "And there are a lot of other blamed funny things about Saba that are true. All the folks keep their coffins in their houses and look after 'em just like the other furniture and most of the young men are sailors. I know two or three who are mates of big transatlantic liners. And the town's so high up

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they can grow potatoes and strawberries and such things there."

"But who do they sell them to?" asked Frank.

"Take 'em over to St. Kitts mostly," Rawlins told him.

"Well, I'd like to go there," declared Tom. "Don't you suppose they saw the airplane? If they're so high up, they might have got a good view of it."

"Sure they might," agreed Rawlins. "But if they did, the folks on Statia did too, and it's no easy job landing at Saba—no dock or harbor—just a tiny strip of pebbly beach among the rocks. It's impossible to go ashore if there's any sea running."

"I call that too bad!" said Frank. "I suppose there's nothing very odd or interesting about Statia."

"Well, I guess it's not so interesting as Saba," admitted the diver. "But it's pretty interesting if you know it's history. It's the first place where the American flag was saluted and during the Revolutionary War it was the richest and busiest port in the world. And the biggest auction the world's ever seen was held there. You'll not see any ships or warehouses to speak of at Orange Town now, but you'll see the remains of the old ones."

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"Then why was it given up?" asked Tom.

"'Twasn't!" laughed Rawlins. "At least, not purposely. You see, during the Revolution, Statia, being Dutch and a free port, was used as a clearing place for the French, British, and Americans. It was neutral, and all the goods going in or out of the West Indies were sent there and stored until called for by ships. But the English sent a warship and seized everything, and then auctioned off the whole lot—ships and merchandise both—and of course, the business was never resumed."

"How do you happen to know so much about all these places, may I ask?" inquired Mr. Henderson. "You seem to be a sort of walking gazetteer of the West Indies."

Rawlins chuckled. "Well, you see," he answered, "father was a sea captain before he took to salvage work and I used to go on trips with him from the time I was a kid, knee high to a grasshopper. His old hooker had a West Indian trade route and I saw nearly all the islands and what I didn't see for myself he told me about. Then, when I took to diving I got a lot of work down here."

"Ah, I understand," said Mr. Henderson. "And, knowing the islands so well, could you suggest any

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one—or several—which would be suitable as landing places for that plane?”

“Sure,” replied the diver. “He could land at pretty nearly any of them—or rather near them. There are long stretches of uninhabited coast on all. Even Barbados, which is the most densely inhabited, has plenty of places where a plane could slip in and none be wiser—only they’d see him coming and run like blazes to watch him come down. No, I don’t expect he’ll try landing near any of the big islands. More likely he’d pick some small cay or outlying islet—there are several around Martinique and Guadeloupe and—by glory, yes! There’s Aves. Great Scott! I hadn’t thought of that.”

“Aves!” repeated Mr. Pauling, questioningly. “You mean the place down off the Venezuelan coast—‘The pleasant Isle of Aves’—in the old pirate song?”

“No, another one,” replied Rawlins. “A tiny bit of land about one hundred miles west of Dominica in the middle of the Caribbean. It’s an ideal spot. Not an inhabitant; flat as a table—although that’s no advantage with a sea plane—and out of the course of all shipping. I’ve a hunch that’s his place.”

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Mr. Pauling laughed. "Your hunches are coming thick and fast, Rawlins," he said. "Is this one so strong you want to shift our course for the island?"

The diver grinned. "Not quite," he replied. "But if we get on his trail and it looks like Aves I'm for it."

"Well, we'll soon know if he passed Statia," remarked Tom. "We're almost there."

## CHAPTER II

### A CRY FOR HELP

**A**S the destroyer drew into the little port of Orange Town, it seemed as if every inhabitant of the quaint Dutch island had come to the waterfront to welcome her, for the arrival of any ship, let alone a destroyer, was a remarkable event in Statia. Since the little warship was now visiting the island for the second time within a fortnight, the people felt as if their island must be becoming famous.

No sooner had the party landed from the cutter than Rawlins began questioning the natives in regard to the seaplane, but for some time no one could be found who had seen it. The diver was just about to give up and had declared his belief that the plane had not passed the island, when a gray-headed, broad-faced old man, whose yellow skin and kinky hair betokened negro blood and whose features and blue eyes were thoroughly Dutch, pushed through the crowd and told Rawlins he had seen the machine passing over.



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To the diver's questions the old man replied that he had been working on his little plantation on the windward side of the island when he had heard a strange noise and, glancing up, had been amazed to see something like a huge bird flying far overhead. For a time he could not imagine what it was and then he remembered the pictures and accounts of airplanes he had seen in the illustrated papers that arrived at Statia at rare intervals and realized that he was actually gazing upon one of the marvelous things which he had always half believed were impossible. In fact, he added, he had come to town for the sole purpose of relating his story to his friends, but all had scoffed at him and had declared he had been mistaken.

"Not a bit of it!" cried Rawlins. "You saw one all right, my friend. What direction was the plane going?"

The old man was not sure, for his mind had been so fully occupied with the wonder of the sight that he had not noted its course, but after a deal of thinking he decided it had been bound for St. Kitts.

"Well, that knocks out my theory about Aves a bit," declared Rawlins. "But there are plenty of spots around St. Kitts where he could have landed

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or he might have gone on to Nevis. Now let's get up to the hospital and see that old walrus of a Dutch captain."

As they walked towards the tiny hospital, the boys expressed surprise that there seemed to be no damage from the hurricane.

"Out of its track," explained Rawlins. "Remember, I told you those hurricanes are narrow. Of course, there's got to be an edge to 'em some place, and besides, they follow pretty regular routes. I'll bet St. Kitts got it, and yet over here—only a few miles away—they never felt it."

When they reached the hospital all hopes of securing information from the skipper of the tramp were abandoned, however, for the attendants told the Americans that the Dutch sea captain had been taken away the previous day by some friends who had called for him.

"That's blamed funny!" exclaimed Rawlins. "They told me down in the town that no ship had been in port since the hurricane."

"Hmm," mused Mr. Pauling. "Perhaps they were friends living on the island." Then, turning to the young doctor who was in charge, he asked, "What sort of men were they? Can you describe



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them? Did they mention how they arrived here?"

"Why, no, I did not ask," replied the interne, who spoke perfect English. "I assumed they came in a vessel—small sloops and schooners often put in from St. Kitts and there are packets coming here from Curacao. They seemed to be seafaring men—not Hollanders, though. One was a heavily built man with a red beard—German or Russian I should say. The other was an American, I think—or possibly English—tall, and very broad, with a smooth face and dark hair."

Mr. Pauling and the others glanced at one another with knowing looks, and an exclamation of surprise escaped from Mr. Pauling's lips.

"I'll say they were his friends!" cried Rawlins, as the party, after thanking the doctor, left the hospital. "And not far away right now. Beat us by twenty-four hours, but, by glory, we've picked up their trail!"

"But how could they get here?" asked Tom. "They didn't come in the airplane or by a ship."

"By the sub, of course!" replied the diver. "I told you I'd bet she got clear before the old tramp blew up. And now they're hiking off to meet that plane."

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"If they haven't already met her," put in Mr. Henderson. "Rawlins, I'm beginning to have as much faith in your hunches as Pauling."

"Well, it's up to us to find out," insisted the diver. "It'll be a hard job to trail the sub, but as long as the High Cockalorum is up in the air, we can keep tabs on him. Let's get a move on and strike over to St. Kitts. The faster we get after those boys the better."

"But how could the sub come in here without being seen?" asked Frank.

"Couldn't," responded Rawlins tersely, "but a small boat from her could. Or maybe they landed at St. Kitts and came over in a sloop. We'll find out down at the bayside."

"That's one advantage of a small place where every one knows every one else and visitors are rare," remarked Mr. Pauling when, after a few questions, they learned that the red-bearded stranger and his companion had arrived in a small schooner and had departed in the same vessel with the Dutch sea captain.

"Yes, these islands are mighty poor places for crooks," agreed Mr. Henderson. "I imagine that's why every one is so honest and crime is so rare."

A few moments later they reached the destroyer,

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and as they stepped aboard Commander Disbrow approached.

"I have a bit of news that may interest you, Mr. Pauling," he announced. "We picked up the *Guiana*—Furness liner, you know—and had a chat with her. Never thought of getting any news of your man—just wanted data on the hurricane—and she reports having sighted an airplane, or rather a sea plane, to the south of Montserrat. Said they thought it a United States machine and tried to signal it but had no response. Reported it as flying south—apparently bound for Guadeloupe or Dominica and about three thousand feet up."

"Bully for you!" cried Rawlins enthusiastically. "That saves us a jaunt over to St. Kitts or Nevis. When did the *Guiana* sight it?"

"About five o'clock last night," replied the Commander.

"Then he was pretty near his landing place!" declared the diver. "He couldn't go on after dark. Come on, Commander, let's beat it for Guadeloupe!"

Half an hour later Statia was scarcely more than a blue cloud on the horizon and St. Kitts loomed hazy and indistinct, while the towering conical volcanic cone of Nevis lay to the eastward.

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Although the boys had been disappointed at not being able to visit these fascinating islands, they had learned much about them from Rawlins and Commander Disbrow. They had heard about the abandoned forts on Brimstone Hill at St. Kitts and about the troops of monkeys which haunt the old barracks and parapets. They had learned, also, for the first time in their lives, that Nevis was the birthplace of Alexander Hamilton and was famous as the spot where Admiral Nelson had been married. But such matters of historical interest appealed far less to the boys than Rawlins' story of the submerged city of Jamestown which was destroyed by an earthquake and sank below the sea in 1689.

"Say, wouldn't it be fun to go down there in a diving suit and look around!" said Tom, when the diver had described how the coral-encrusted ruins could still be seen through the water on calm days.

"Yep," agreed Rawlins. "I've often kind of hankered to have a look at it—and at Port Royal, over in Jamaica. That slid into the sea one day—with a lot of treasure in it, too. It used to be a regular hang-out for the pirates and the whole shooting match went under during an earthquake in 1692. Some

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considerable spell of time since then, but I shouldn't wonder if a diver could find something there."

"Gee, I wouldn't like to live down here where towns have the habit of getting drowned," declared Frank.

Mr. Pauling laughed. "People who live in earthquake or volcanic countries become accustomed to such things," he said. "Even St. Pierre, Martinique, where nearly forty thousand people were killed, is being built up and inhabited again, I hear."

A little later, land was reported ahead and through their glasses the boys saw a rounded, gray mass breaking the sea line. This, the Commander told them, was Redonda, and he added that it was an isolated, barren rock, whose only inhabitants were the lighthouse keeper and a small company of laborers who were employed in gathering the phosphate rock.

Then, beyond, and so green that, as Tom said, it looked like a bit of green velvet, the island of Montserrat gradually rose above the horizon before the speeding destroyer.

"Gosh, that is an emerald isle!" exclaimed Frank.

"Yes, and a little Ireland too," agreed Rawlins. "If you went ashore there, you'd think you were dreaming. Every one of the niggers speaks with a



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brogue and there are Mulvaney's and Dennises and Muldoons as black as the ace of spades and some of them with red hair. You see, Montserrat was settled originally by the Irish and the brogue and the names have come down through generations."

"It seems to me we're leaving all the most interesting places without seeing them," said Frank regretfully. "I'd like mighty well to see Irish negroes."

"You must remember we're neither on a pleasure cruise or a joy ride," Mr. Pauling reminded him. "And you're fortunate even to see the islands."

Then, turning to Rawlins, he asked, "Have you definite plans in view, Rawlins? I suppose there is no use in stopping at Montserrat as long as the *Guiana* reported the plane south of there."

"No, I'm going to ask you to let the Commander just hustle the old girl right along and radio Guadeloupe for information. He ought to be able to get it now. If they sighted the plane, we'll have to try Dominica, but there's no radio station there and I'm still betting on Aves. You remember about that looting of the bank at Dominica? Well, if they had a hang-out at Aves, that would have been dead easy. I think, unless we hear he passed Guadeloupe headed

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away from it, that we'll hike to Aves without stopping."

Mr. Pauling chuckled. "It seems to me that Henderson and I are scarcely more than accessories now," he declared. "Everything seems to have fallen into your hands. But that's quite right, Rawlins. You know the islands and we don't, and we're following your hunch, you know."

A few moments later, Bancroft, the wireless operator, appeared. "We got Guadeloupe, Sir," he informed Mr. Pauling. "They have no report of an airship."

"By glory, then 'tis Aves!" cried Rawlins. "There isn't another spot he could have made before dark last night."

"Unless he came down at some out of the way part of Guadeloupe," put in Mr. Henderson. "I've been talking with Disbrow and he says it's a wild, little known coast, with few inhabitants."

"Yes," agreed the diver. "But I figure this way. That's not the first time the Old Boy has used a plane—and you can't grab a seaplane at any old time and place when the spirit moves you. No, he keeps that machine for emergencies or uses it as a regular thing between certain bases of his own and, even if he

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*could* make a landing at Guadeloupe or one of the inhabited islands without being seen, he couldn't keep the plane there unknown to any one. That's why I'm strong on the Aves hunch. He could have anything he wanted there, and none the wiser."

"Your reasoning is sound," declared Mr. Pauling, "and I agree with you. When should we reach Aves?"

"We could make it to-night," replied the Commander, to whom Mr. Pauling had addressed the last query, "but I'd prefer to slow down and make it by daybreak—its a mere speck and scarcely ten feet above water and there's a risk in running for it in the dark."

"Yes, by all means, wait for dawn," assented Mr. Pauling. "We could accomplish nothing at night and if there are men there, our lights might warn them."

Accordingly, the destroyer slowed down and with the vast bulk of Guadeloupe stretching for miles along the eastern horizon, the little vessel slid easily through the sea towards her goal. As usual, Bancroft or one of the boys constantly listened at the radio receivers, but no sounds, save the messages passing between two distant merchant ships, came in.



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With the first faint streaks of light upon the eastern sky, the destroyer picked up speed and tore southward for the tiny speck of land that lay below the horizon ahead. The forward gun was manned and ready for emergencies; the two boys and their companions peered anxiously through the gray dawn for a first glimpse of the sought-for islet, and all thrilled with expectancy and excitement.

"There 'tis!" cried Rawlins, who was the first to catch a glimpse of the tiny gray smudge that broke the even level of the sea's rim.

Instantly, all glasses were focused on the spot and rapidly it rose and took form as a low, flat-topped bit of land, rimmed with white surf and with clouds of sea birds wheeling above it. So low was the island that within half an hour of first sighting it, the destroyer was as close to it as the Commander dared approach and all were anxiously searching the desolate spot for some sign of life or of the plane.

"Looks as if your hunch were wrong for once, Rawlins," said Mr. Pauling. "I don't see a sign of anything but bare rock and birds."

"Well, it's all-fired funny," declared the diver, "but I'm not sure even yet. Maybe the plane's on the other side of the island or in some cove. I won't

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be satisfied until I've searched every inch of the place."

But when, a few minutes later, they landed upon this isolated, almost unknown bit of forsaken land and were almost deafened by the screams, cries, and protests of the countless thousands of gulls, terns, gannets, pelicans and boobies that made it their home, the island seemed absolutely devoid of all traces of human beings. Rawlins, however, insisted there was no other place where the sea plane could have found a resting place for the night and he searched here, there and everywhere.

Finally, when the party had almost completed the circuit of the little ten-acre spot, the diver, who was in advance, gave a shout.

"I'll say they were here!" he announced as the others hurried to where he stood at the head of a deep indentation or cove in the rocky shore. "Look here," he continued, pointing to the bit of sandy beach, "a boat's been pulled up on the sand here within the last twenty-four hours and there are their empty gasoline tins. Guess my hunch wasn't so far wrong after all."

"Hmm," muttered Mr. Pauling, as he examined the marks on the beach and sniffed at the empty tin cans.

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"I'll have to admit your hunch was right, but it doesn't do us much good. Our birds have flown."

"Yes, hang it all!" exclaimed Rawlins. "They probably saw us coming and cleared out, but they'll have to land again somewhere."

"That's quite true and all very well," agreed Mr. Pauling, "but we haven't the least idea where or when. No, it's no use trying to chase all over the Caribbean after them. There's nothing to do but go back and await future developments. I'm willing to admit we've been beaten."

"Yes, the gang's broken up and the tramp and their big submarine destroyed. I doubt if they'll give further trouble," said Mr. Henderson. "I think we've succeeded in accomplishing a great deal as it is."

While they were talking, they approached the waiting cutter. Suddenly a screeching roar from the destroyer's siren drowned the clamor of the birds.

"Jove! What's that for?" exclaimed Mr. Henderson. "Hello, Disbrow's signaling. Can you read the wigwag message, Rawlins?"

The diver stared fixedly at the figure of a sailor standing clearly outlined on the destroyer's bridge

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and rapidly waving the little flags in an endeavor to convey some message to those on the island.

"Come a-b-o-a-r-d," translated Rawlins, as the flags flashed up and down. "I-m-p-o-r-t-a-n-t n-e-w-s."

"By glory!" he ejaculated, as the sailor finished and the message ended. "What in blazes has he seen?"

Rapidly, they hurried to the boat, scrambled in, and were soon speeding towards the destroyer, all impatient to learn what had occurred to cause them to be summoned and utterly at a loss as to what the "important news" could be.

"Great Scott, but he's in a hurry!" cried Rawlins, as the sound of the anchor winch and the rattle of incoming cable reached them. "He's getting in his anchors already. And he's pacing up and down as if the deck were red hot. I wonder what's up!"

"It's an S. O. S.!" announced the Commander, as Mr. Pauling gained the deck, "and it might mean anything. Came in 'S. O. S—submarine' and then stopped short. Not another word."

Before he had ceased speaking, the destroyer's screws were churning the water and the island was rapidly slipping away.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Mr. Pauling. "Looks as

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if these men were up to their old game! But where was the ship when she called? Do you know her position?"

"No, only in a general way," replied the Commander. "Bancroft got the message by accident—was overhauling the radio compass when he picked it up. That's the only way we know even the direction. They're southwest, that's all we know."

"I'll say that's important news!" cried Rawlins. "That shows the sub's still afloat, but I'd like to know what the dickens became of the plane."

"Do you think they really sank a ship?" asked Tom. "Why, they can't expect to get away with that sort of thing!"

"Of course, they did," declared Mr. Pauling. "Otherwise the vessel would not have sent the S. O. S. and the very fact that the message was cut off shows they did. Poor fellows! They never had a chance and we may be too late to save them now. As for getting away with it, these men are desperate—utterly unprincipled, as you know. Nothing they can do will make their plight any worse. They've sunk ships before—so why not again?"

"But why should they?" persisted Tom. "I should



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think they'd just be trying to get away, not stopping to sink ships."

"That's what I've been thinking," declared Rawlins. "The whole thing's blamed funny. I've a hunch it's all a blind. I'll bet that message was sent by the sub or the plane just to get us away from here—or something."

"Hunches or not, I'm not taking chances," declared the Commander stiffly. "If I get an S. O. S. I answer."

"Righto!" exclaimed the diver. "Glad you do. And, if luck's with us, we may get there in time to sight the sub and kill two birds with one stone."

But to find a ship or its survivors when its exact latitude and longitude are known and to find such a tiny speck upon the broad ocean when only its general direction is known are two very different matters. So meager had been the sudden call for aid which had reached the destroyer that no one could say whether the ship that sent it had been five or fifty miles away and as there had been no time in which to move the loop antenna of the radio compass about until the exact direction was determined, the chances of the destroyer's finding the vessel or any of her company were very remote. Throughout the

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day and all through the night the destroyer searched, steaming in circles and with her powerful search-lights sweeping the sea.

In the hopes that another signal might yet come in, men were kept constantly at the radio instruments listening and sending forth messages, but the only replies received were from far distant ships asking what the trouble was. To all of these the operators gave what little information they had and asked if others had heard the frenzied call for help. But only one had, a tramp bound from Cuba for Curacao, and unlike the destroyer she had received the S. O. S. by her regular antenna and so could not know the direction whence it came.

"Well, some of those ships may pick up the poor rascals," said Mr. Henderson when on the following morning Commander Disbrow reported the messages which had been exchanged. "But it's odd none of them heard the call except that tramp."

"I think that proves the vessel was near us," declared Tom. "If Mr. Bancroft got it on the loop and they couldn't hear it on their regular aërials, the message must have been sent from very close."

"Yes, that's quite true," agreed Mr. Henderson.

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"But it doesn't make matters much simpler. Even a few square miles of sea is a big place."

"You said it!" exclaimed Rawlins. "And a blamed sight bigger to the poor beggars hanging on to wreckage or in a small boat than to us. But I still have an idea it was a blind. That would account for those ships not getting it."

"I don't just see what you mean," said Mr. Pauling.

"Why, if it was sent from the sub or the plane, it would be a weak message and wouldn't go far and it may have been sent from within half a mile of the island. Yes, by glory!—Come to think of it, they might have been right there alongside and just sent that message from underwater!"

"Jove, I hadn't thought of that!" admitted Mr. Pauling. "I wonder—"

Before he could complete his sentence, the deep-throated cry of the lookout rang through the little ship, and at his words all crowded to the rails and peered ahead.

"Small boat two points off the starboard bow!" was the sailor's shout.



## CHAPTER III

### THE CASTAWAYS

**V**ERY small and pitiful appeared the tiny speck bobbing up and down upon that wide expanse of restless sea in the faint morning light. But rapidly it took on form as the destroyer slid hissing through the sparkling water toward it. Through their glasses the boys could see that it was a ship's lifeboat filled with men and that one of the occupants was standing up and wildly waving a bit of cloth fastened to an oar.

"I'll say they're mighty glad to see us!" exclaimed Rawlins. "By gravy, it makes me think of war times again! Confound those sneaking Bolsheviks, they're as bad as the Huns."

"Worse," declared Mr. Pauling tersely. "The Germans had the excuse of war and these rascals are merely cutthroats. I wonder if this boat's the only one that escaped."

"We'll know in a moment," said Mr. Henderson. "Lucky we found them—there wasn't one chance in

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a million. Things like this make the most skeptical believe in the Almighty."

"And the fact that that bunch on the sub get away with it makes a fellow believe in Satan as well," supplemented the diver.

A moment later the destroyer's engines ceased to throb; she slipped gently through the waves, and presently was resting motionless, rising and falling, while the ocean castaways bent to the oars and pulled around in her lee.

Then a coil of line spun from the hands of a waiting bluejacket, the man in the bow of the lifeboat caught it and the next instant the haggard-faced occupants of the little craft were being helped over the destroyer's rail.

There were twenty-two in all—a motley, cosmopolitan lot, the typical crew of a modern steamship. Tow-headed, broad-faced Scandinavians; sallow, black-haired, blue-cheeked Spaniards, whose greasy trousers and grimy faces marked them as wipers, firemen and engine room crew; a few swarthy Italians; one or two who might have been of almost any nationality; two colored men; and a broad-shouldered, ruddy-faced individual with keen, pale blue eyes who was evidently in command.

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"Strike me pink, but we're lucky beggars!" exclaimed the latter, as he leaped on to the destroyer's deck.

"Are you the captain?" asked Commander Disbrow. "Glad to have saved you. We got your radio yesterday morning, but had little chance of finding you. More luck than anything else. All your crew accounted for?"

The Englishman drew himself up and saluted in true naval style. "No, Sir," he exclaimed. "I'm the chief officer, ship *Devonshire*, Liverpool for Trinidad and Demerara. Captain Masters lost 'is life, Sir—defending 'is ship, Sir."

"Brave man!" exclaimed Mr. Pauling. "Went down with his ship, I suppose."

The Englishman turned and looked at him in surprise. "Whatever do you mean, Sir?" he exclaimed. "Bless us, the ship wasn't sunk, Sir. Captain Masters was shot down on his bridge, Sir."

"The ship wasn't sunk!" cried Mr. Pauling. "Then why are you adrift in a small boat and why did you send an S. O. S. and what *did* occur? Come, let's get this matter straightened out at once!"

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“The ship was took, Sir. Made a prize of by the bloody submarine—begging your pardon for the word, Sir. It was this way, Sir. The dirty beggars never gave us arf a chance—played a dirty Hun trick on us, the swine! You see, Sir, we sighted a drifting boat full of men and bore down and took them abroad, Sir, and no sooner were they over the rail than they whips out their revolvers and orders our ’ands up. Blow me for a bloomin’ fish if we wasn’t took that by surprise, Sir, that we does it, Sir. All but the Captain and ‘Sparks.’ They were looking on—you know all hands always crowds the rails to see what’s going on when a boat’s picked up, Sir—and it was all over in a minute. No sooner had they stuck us up than the bloomin’ sub bobs up. With that we was all aback and that dazed, with the suddenness of it and the sub and all, that we don’t rightly know what to make of it, Sir. And then ‘Sparks’ makes a dash for his room and Captain Masters fires at the dirty swine just as one of them jumps after ‘Sparks.’ I see, poor ‘Sparks’ stagger and lurch into his door and the bloomin’ beggar what shot him drops and the next second there’s a rifle shot from the sub and Captain Masters springs up and pitches into the sea, Sir. You say you got a

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radio from the ship, Sir? Then 'Sparks' must 'ave got it off before he died, Sir."

"Yes, yes!" cried Mr. Pauling. "That accounts for the message ending half finished; but go on, what happened after the captain and the operator were shot?"

"Why, the blinkin' bloomin' devils just lined us up and ordered us into a boat and sent a crew abroad the *Devonshire* from the sub. And just afore they steamed off an left us, Sir, strike me purple hif a bloomin' airplane didn't show up! Blow me, but I thought we was saved, Sir. But instead of savin' of us the blighted plane parses us by and goes along of the ship, Sir, and there we was adrift in an open boat with only a gallon of water and no provisions and no compass and a makin' up our minds to face death and old Davy Jones like proper British seaman—though only five of us was British—when we sights your little ship, Sir."

"What course did they steer?" snapped out Commander Disbrow.

"About south by east—as near as I could judge by the sun, Sir," replied the officer.

The next instant, sharp, quick orders had been given, and, as if shot from a bow, the destroyer



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leaped into sudden speed and surged through the sea towards the south.

Then, as the rescued men were half starved and worn out, the questions which Mr. Pauling and his friends were so anxious to ask were put off until the latest victims of the dastardly "reds" could be fed and rested.

Twenty-four hours in an open boat, (twelve of them under a blazing tropical sun), without food and with but a gallon of water for twenty-two men, might kill the average landsmen, but the survivors of the *Devonshire* seemed to be affected very little by the hardships of their experience and declared that a hearty meal and a few hours' rest were all they needed to make them "perfectly fit" as Robinson, the chief-officer, put it.

While they were resting, Mr. Pauling and his companions were busily discussing this latest exploit of the men they were trying to run down and by deduction and reasoning were striving to fathom the "reds" object in taking possession of the *Devonshire* as well as their next moves.

"My opinion is that they are making for some port in order to escape unsuspected," declared Mr. Henderson. "They had no refuge they could reach



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in the submarine or seaplane when they found us hot on their trail and approaching Aves. But by steaming boldly into port with a freight steamer, they could then desert and scatter without arousing suspicions until they had disappeared."

"That's my idea also," affirmed Mr. Pauling. "But I'm at a loss to understand why they should continue to use the plane. If that appeared at any port, it would at once attract attention. I should have imagined that they would have sunk it or destroyed it and would all have taken to the *Devonshire*."

"Perhaps they did—later," suggested Mr. Henderson, "but they cannot escape us. They have only twenty-four hours' start, we can make twice the freighter's speed, and the nearest port is a good thirty-six or forty hours' run in the direction they steamed."

"Yes, but don't count on their keeping that course," said Rawlins. "They're foxy guys and they may have steered south by east just to fool those boys in the boat. As soon as hull down they may have swung to east or west—or even turned on their tracks and headed north. Darned funny they were decent enough not to murder the whole crew."

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And my idea about the plane is that they're using her for a scout to warn them of other ships. From a few thousand feet up, the pilot of the plane can spot a ship way below the horizon and the *Devonshire* can keep clear of 'em. Why, by glory! they could probably spot us and know we're following them. I'll say we've got some job cut out for us, if we're going to try to run 'em down. And when it gets dark they can slip away, easy as is. Now I don't want to butt in all the time, but my idea would be to fight them with their own weapons—play their own game and fool 'em. If we shift our course as if we'd given up or were on the wrong track and send out a few fake radio messages, they'll think we've given up and they'll beat it for some port. Then, by tipping off the port authorities, they can nab the bunch when they arrive."

"Hmm," muttered Mr. Pauling. "A very good plan, Rawlins, except for one or two flaws in it. For example, if we tip off the authorities, what is to prevent those on the *Devonshire* from hearing the messages and acting accordingly? And if we don't know the course they're actually taking, how can we shift ours in such a way as to make them feel sure

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we have abandoned the chase? Finally, how will we know what port they intend entering? They might sail for Europe or Asia or the South Seas, for all we know."

"Well, you've stumped me on the first question, I admit," chuckled the diver. "That's your business Mr. Pauling—have to use some cipher I suppose. But the others are easy. If we send radio messages to some nearby port that we're coming in—asking to have supplies or stores ready, for instance—those Bolsheviks will bite all right. And as far as knowing what port they'll head for is concerned, if they think they're not being chased they'll go to the port where there's the least danger and that's where the ship's papers are made out for—Trinidad or Demerara."

"By Jove! I don't know but what you're right," exclaimed Mr. Pauling. "I think I can arrange the cipher messages—in fact, in confidence, I can let you know that a code was all arranged long before we left St. Thomas. Every executive of every British and French colony down here knows it. We had reasons for not giving it to the Dutch in view of the suspicious actions of that Dutch tramp—and I'll guarantee if the *Devonshire* puts into any British or

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French port, our piratical 'reds' will find they've stepped into a trap that's set and baited."

By the time Robinson reappeared on deck, looking a very different being from the haggard, dull-eyed seaman who had been rescued from the *Devonshire's* boat, Mr. Pauling had conferred with Commander Disbrow and plans had been made in accordance with Rawlins' suggestion. Robinson, when told of this, agreed with the diver that doubtless the "reds" intended sailing the *Devonshire* boldly into some port and then slipping away, one at a time. He also declared that he believed they would steam for either Trinidad or Demerara, as the ship's papers were made out for those ports. In order to consult with him and secure his opinions, it was of course necessary to acquaint him somewhat with the activities of the fugitives, but he asked no questions and made no effort to learn more of Mr. Pauling's mission than the latter saw fit to divulge.

"Was the *Devonshire* ever in Trinidad or Demerara, Mr. Robinson?" inquired Mr. Pauling. "That is, with Captain Masters and the other officers in command?"

"Not as far as I know," replied the other. "I've been on her for three years and this is my first trip

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out here. She's always been in the East Indian trade heretofore."

"Ah, then that makes it still easier for the rascals," commented Mr. Pauling. "They can readily pass themselves off for the ship's officers. By the way, can you describe the appearance of any of the men who boarded the ship?"

"Strike me, Sir, but I was too struck 'twixt wind and water to take note of their appearance," declared the officer. "I do remember one who appeared to be in command, however—a big chappie with a red beard."

"That's the one!" cried Rawlins. "By glory, I'd like to get my hands on him!"

"So would I, old thing," declared Robinson. "But why the bally pirates let us free is a stumper for me. They might have known some ship might pick us up and we'd give the bloomin' gaff away."

"Yes, that is a puzzle," agreed Mr. Henderson, "but I suppose even men of their type have a limit to the murders they commit."

It had been decided to make for Dominica, partly because it was the nearest British island and the survivors of the *Devonshire* could be cared for there, and partly because Mr. Pauling and Mr. Henderson



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were anxious to see and talk with the officials regarding the looting of the bank, which had occurred some time before and which they believed had been done by the same gang of rascals they were trailing.

By the middle of the afternoon land was sighted, an opalescent, hazy mass topped by great banks of clouds and looking, as Tom expressed it, "more like a dream island than real land."

As the destroyer drew rapidly nearer and sky-piercing peaks, vast blue gorges, endless forest-clad mountains, and wonderful golden-green valleys appeared, it looked more and more like a dream or a phantasy, for the boys could hardly believe that anything real could be so beautiful. Still it was far away and as the little warship slid smoothly through the incredibly blue sea that showed scarcely a wave in the massive island's lee, the boys stood gazing steadfastly at this most picturesque and lovely of all the lovely Caribbean islands.

"Gosh, but I'm glad we decided to come here!" exclaimed Frank as Rawlins joined them at the rail. "When you told us back at Statia that St. Kitts couldn't compare with Dominica I thought you were just joking, but gee, this is simply wonderful!"

"I'll say 'tis!" replied the diver. "Every time I



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see it I get a new thrill. And you'll find it mighty interesting, too. It was right off Dominica that Rodney licked the French and changed the history of the West Indies. There's a mountain lake in a crater and an active volcano called the Boiling Lake here and over on the other side there's an Indian settlement where the last pure-blooded Caribs in the West Indies live."

"Oh, I do hope we stay long enough to see some of the place!" cried Tom.

"Why couldn't we have been here instead of at St. Thomas or St. John?"

"Perhaps, if you'd radioed the skipper of the Dutch tramp or the red-bearded chap, they might have accomodated you and come here," laughed Mr. Pauling who had approached. "But, joking aside, I'd like to see more of Dominica myself. It's certainly a glorious sight."

"What do they raise here?" asked Mr. Henderson, who had also joined the group.

"Limes mostly," replied Rawlins. "The famous Rose lime juice all comes from Dominica. Father used to come here regularly for green limes and juice. It's the biggest lime producing country in the world, I've heard him say."

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"Oh, I see the town!" cried Frank. "Right there at the mouth of that big valley!"

"Yes, that's Roseau," said Rawlins. "Not much of a town, but with a mighty fine botanic station. And you'll find the natives interesting, too. Lots of them still wear the old creole dress and they all speak a queer Frenchy sort of lingo called Patois."

"Why, I thought it was an English island," exclaimed Tom.

"So 'tis," the diver assured him. "But lots of the people don't speak English. It's been French and British by turn and it's between two French islands—Guadeloupe and Martinique—and the country people and most of the town's people are more French than British."

The island was now in plain view and as the sun sank into the west, the great masses of clouds above the deep green mountains turned slowly to gold and then to rosy pink; the vast gorges and ravines took on shades of violet and deep purple; the sea appeared like a sheet of amethyst, and as the destroyer slowly lost headway and her anchor plunged overboard, a magnificent rainbow sprang as if by magic from mountain side to mountain side, spanning the valley with a multicolored bridge.

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Even before the destroyer's anchor had splashed into the sea and the rattle and roar of her chains echoed from the hills, she was surrounded by a flotilla of gayly painted small boats. Some were ordinary rowboats, but many were queer-looking little craft, like big canoes with projecting bows like the rams of old style warships and one and all were manned by pleasant-faced, brown-skinned natives who gabbled and chattered in a strange, utterly unintelligible jargon. But before the boys had more than a glimpse of the boats and their occupants, they were forced to scurry under cover, as from a clear sky rain poured down in torrents, blotting out the distant mountains and veiling the near-by quay and town with a white curtain.

"Golly!" exclaimed Tom. "It's pouring cats and dogs and there wasn't a cloud overhead."

Rawlins laughed. "That's Dominica all right!" he replied. "Rainiest spot in the world, I guess. My father used to say they measured the rainfall here by yards and not by inches."

"But how can it rain when there are no clouds?" persisted Tom, to whom this phenomenon was most mystifying.

"I think I can explain that," volunteered Com-

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mander Disbrow. "It's the moisture laden air from the Atlantic blowing across these forest-covered mountains. The moisture is condensed and falls as rain before it has time to gather in a vapor and form clouds. I've seen the same thing in the Azores."

But now the rain had ceased as abruptly as it had begun and presently the ship's cutter was in the water. Five minutes later the boys stepped ashore at the little stone and concrete pier.

While Mr. Pauling, Mr. Henderson and Commander Disbrow turned up the hill towards Government House, the two boys and Rawlins strolled through the quaint little town and entered the big botanic station. Never had Tom and Frank been so delighted or so enthusiastic over new and strange sights as in Roseau, for it was utterly unlike anything they had ever seen or imagined. The chattering colored women in their long, trailing, stiffly starched, gaudy dresses with brilliant silk foulards or kerchiefs about their necks and their jaunty, rainbow-hued turbans gave a very foreign, out-of-the-world effect to the spot. The narrow cobbled streets, with the open ditches, filled with swiftly flowing water; the French names over the shops and stores; and the

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wooden houses with outjutting balconies forming shelters for great casks of lime juice, trays of cacao beans, and diminutive native ponies—all lent a most picturesque touch to the place. The boys even declared that the miserable huts with their walls made partly from discarded kerosene tins and rusty corrugated iron and which were oddly sandwiched in between the good buildings only added to the attractions of the little town.

But when they reached the gardens and strolled along the perfectly kept drives and walks between broad green lawns dotted with every imaginable tropic shrub, palm, and flower, and wandered through dark avenues of clove, nutmeg and cinnamon trees, with the air heavy with the mingled odors of orchids, jasmine and spices, they could not find words to express their appreciation.

“Gee, a fellow could wander here for a week and not see it all!” declared Tom.

“And say, wouldn’t it be just great to ride up that valley into the mountains?” cried Frank. “Golly, it looks wild and interesting.”

“It is,” Rawlins assured him. “Maybe you’ll have a chance to try it. You can go to the Mountain lake and back in a day and anyway you can climb



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up Morne Bruce here to-morrow morning and have a fine view of the valley."

Reluctantly, the boys turned back and taking a different route through the town, reached the waiting boat. To the boys' intense delight, although their elders chafed at the delay, Mr. Pauling told them that he planned to stay in Dominica to await expected news of the *Devonshire's* arrival at Trinidad or Demerara and that he had no objection to their proposed ride up the valley as it would be impossible for the *Devonshire* to reach port within the next twenty-four hours.

As a result, the enthusiastic boys could scarcely wait to eat breakfast the next morning, but hurried ashore with Rawlins and found the ponies, which the diver had ordered through one of the native boatmen the night before, waiting for them.

Even their boyish imaginations had never prepared them for the beauties, the constant surprises, the strangeness and the interests of that ride. They passed for miles beside the tumbling, roaring river through endless lime orchards; they climbed steep grades that wound around hillsides glorious with masses of brilliant flowers; they rode under arches of giant bamboos rising fifty feet above their heads,



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and as they mounted higher the way led through forests of stupendous trees, enormous tree ferns, and tangled, cablelike lianas, where even at midday, it was like twilight. Often the narrow road wound around the verges of terrific precipices and, involuntarily, the boys shuddered and drew back as the sure-footed mountain ponies picked their way so close to the brink that stones, dislodged by their passage, went crashing down to the dark forest a thousand feet beneath. Sometimes too, they halted for brief rests and listened to the flute-like songs of the "mountain whistler" or watched humming birds flashing like living gems among the flowers of orchids or begonias.

Then at last they came out upon the topmost mountain ridge and as the heavy mist, which Rawlins told them was a cloud, drifted away, they looked upon a vast sea of forest-covered mountains with a glimmering little lake nestled among the verdure in a bowl-like crater at their feet. Here, above the clouds, they ate their lunch and, heedless of the drenching rain, returned down the mountains late in the afternoon. As they came out upon the waterfront, they saw smoke pouring from the funnels of the destroyer.

"Holy mackerel!" exclaimed Rawlins. "They must have heard something. They've got steam up."

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Scarcely had the three scrambled into the waiting cutter, when the little craft was speeding towards the destroyer and to Rawlins' questions the petty officer in command replied that the Commander was only awaiting their arrival before sailing.

No sooner had the cutter left the dock than the roar of the winch engines and the incoming cable told of the anchor coming in, and scarcely were the diver and the two boys over the little ship's side and the cutter hooked to the davit falls before the destroyer was forging ahead and making for the open sea.

"What's up?" cried Rawlins as he gained the deck. "Get a message?"

"Yes, an hour ago," replied Mr. Pauling. "Here it is."

The diver and the two boys glanced eagerly over the slip, and read: "*Devonshire* and crew held according to request. May, Inspector Police. Port of Spain."

"Hurrah!" cried the boys in unison. "They're caught!"

"I'll say they are!" exclaimed Rawlins. "Walked right into our trap!"

## CHAPTER IV

### MORE MYSTERIES

OF course, every one was highly elated at the successful outcome of the ruse which Rawlins had suggested and all felt that at last the long chase was over, that the leaders of the gang of "reds" were prisoners under lock and key at Trinidad, and that soon the destroyer would be homeward bound with her mission successfully accomplished. And no one was more pleased at the outcome than Robinson, the chief officer of the *Devonshire*. At the suggestion of the officials in Dominica, it had been decided to keep him and his men on the destroyer until definite news was received of his ship's whereabouts when, as he had pointed out to Mr. Pauling and Commander Disbrow, he and his men could be put aboard the *Devonshire* and could again assume the duties which had been so tragically interrupted by the rascals from the submarine. Moreover, as the Administrator of Dominica had reminded Mr. Pauling, the presence of

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Robinson and his men would be needed at whatever port the *Devonshire* was held, in order to identify the pirates and to testify to the facts.

And now, knowing that he would soon be back on his own ship and would have an opportunity of telling his story to the British authorities and would have the satisfaction of seeing the murderers of Captain Masters and the radio operator receive their just punishment, Robinson and his men were, if possible, more elated than Mr. Pauling and his party.

"It means hangin' for the bally blighters!" he declared. "Piracy 'twas—no less—and though I've never been to a hangin' yet, it would do me good to go to theirs—when I think of Captain Masters and poor 'Sparks' shot down in cold blood."

"Yes, they richly deserve it," agreed Mr. Pauling. "But I'm afraid punishment for this crime will rob us of the chance to punish them for the other crimes they have committed. However, it makes little difference what government deals with them, I suppose."

"Yes, you may be sure the British are not going to give them up," declared Mr. Henderson. "We may think our English cousins slow in some things, but British laws and British justice are inexorable as well as swift and these rascals will curse the day they

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ran their stolen ship into a British port. Better for them had they given themselves up to us.”

“I suppose we’d better send a message to Trinidad saying we’re coming and have the *Devonshire’s* crew and chief officer aboard,” said Mr. Pauling. “I should have done it before. No need of cipher now. Just see Bancroft, Rawlins, and give him this message.”

Presently the diver returned, a frown on his face. “He can’t send it, Mr. Pauling,” he announced. “Something’s wrong with his instruments. He says they went wrong just after we got the message this morning and he can’t locate the trouble. Just as soon as he gets the things fixed, he’ll shoot it off.”

“Too bad,” exclaimed Mr. Pauling, “but there’s really no hurry. Lucky it didn’t happen when we had really important matters to send—for example, when we notified the officials of the *Devonshire’s* seizure.”

“And if he doesn’t get his set fixed, we can send with ours, when we get nearer,” said Tom.

“To be sure!” assented his father. “I’d almost forgotten that—it’s been so long since you boys were called upon.”



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Interested as they were in everything pertaining to radio, the two boys hurried to the radio room and found Bancroft busy at his instruments and thoroughly exasperated.

"It's just got my goat!" he exclaimed, as he glanced up at the boys' arrival. "I never ran up against anything like it. I've been over the antenna and the insulation, and I've worked back to the inductance and the condensers. Everything seems ship-shape and yet the whole blamed thing seems dead. Current's all right, I've tried new tubes, and the wave meter and ammeter tests are O. K. and yet I can't get a blessed reply."

"Well, that doesn't prove you're not sending," declared Tom. "How do you know the trouble isn't in the station you're trying to get? Maybe your messages are going out all right and they get them but can't send back."

"Oh, I'm not such a boob as not to think of that!" retorted Bancroft. "I've tried four different stations and not a reply from any. And the radio compass is in the same fix. It's downright uncanny, I tell you. Look here! The filament oscillates and the ammeter registers and yet I'll bet there isn't a wave going out. It's just as if the thing were short



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circuited somewhere, but I can swear it's not. I've even hooked up a whole new set."

"Say, I've an idea to test it and be sure you're not sending," cried Tom. "I'll go over to the radio compass and listen and you send and see if I hear anything. Then I'll send and see if you can hear. If there's even a trace of waves, we ought to get them at a few yards away."

"That's a great scheme," agreed Bancroft enthusiastically. "And say, I wonder if your sets are all right."

"We'll try them too, after we do this," said Tom as he left the room.

But Tom's scheme was a dismal failure. Although the set at the radio compass seemed in perfect working order, he could detect no sign of a message from Bancroft's instruments a few yards away and when he returned to the wireless room, Bancroft reported that he had heard nothing.

"Well, that does beat the Dutch," declared Tom. "Now I'm going to test our sets. Perhaps everything's hoodooed. You go to the radio compass, Frank, and Mr. Bancroft can stay here and I'll go to our sets and we'll try to get some sound or to send. If they're all dead, it must be some atmospheric trouble. Per-

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haps the air's full of electricity or something."

"Whew!" exclaimed Bancroft, "That gives me an idea! Perhaps it's due to that volcano over at Martinique—Mt. Pelee you know, the one that destroyed St. Pierre. It's still active and it's only a few miles from Dominica. If I could only get some dope from the station at Fort de France I could find out."

"I don't know," replied Tom. "I read somewhere that active volcanoes did all sorts of queer things to ships' compasses and if they affect magnets, I don't see why they shouldn't affect radio instruments. But if that's it, then it's mighty funny you got the message this morning."

"But I didn't!" exclaimed Bancroft. "I haven't received any message since day before yesterday. That message your father got was a cable."

"Gosh!" ejaculated Tom. "I thought all along it was a radio. I never asked, but just took it for granted. Then you don't know how long these sets have been out of order?"

"Well, I know they were all right when we sent those messages off after we picked up the *Devonshire's* boat," replied Bancroft.

"Then perhaps it's the volcano," said Tom. "If

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it is, the sets will work all right after we get farther away."

"And we've forgotten something else," put in Frank. "How can we tell whether it's the sending or receiving sets that have gone bad? Maybe they all send and won't receive or all receive and won't send."

"Why, of course that's so," assented Tom. "If it's the same trouble with all—the volcano or atmosphere or anything, then we may all be sending but can't receive. But you're wrong, in a way, because we know it must be in the receiving end anyway, or we'd hear some messages from ships or shore even if they didn't get ours. So if we're not sending, the things have gone wrong both ways. Well, I'm going to ours now, so listen."

It was now night, a dark, inky black night such as only occurs in the tropics, with the darkness seeming to shut one in by a curtain and Tom had actually to feel his way along the decks. The sea was fairly smooth, and the destroyer, steadied by her swift rush through the water, was making easy weather of it, and by the vibration of her hull Tom knew that she was being driven at the greatest speed possible in her still crippled condition. The decks

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seemed deserted, although Tom knew that, hidden from view in the blackness, the watch was being kept and once he glimpsed a dim, white, ghostly figure as it passed through the rays of a running light forward and he heard faint voices from the direction of the chart room and bridge. But somehow he had a peculiar feeling of mystery or danger afoot and glanced nervously about. Then, realizing how foolish he was, he shook off the childish fears of the dark and reaching the stairs descended towards the little room where he and Frank had installed their radio outfits.

The steel-walled, narrow alleyway was dimly lighted by screened electric bulbs and reaching the door to the room, Tom turned the knob, swung it open, and stepped into the black interior. With groping fingers he reached for the switch beside the door and pressed the button. At his touch the place was flooded with brilliant light and dazed by the sudden glare Tom involuntarily turned his face and blinked. The next instant the steel ceiling seemed to crash down upon his head, his knees sagged limply, the light danced and spun about and he felt himself sinking into a bottomless black pit.

Slowly consciousness came back to him. First,

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as a dull, throbbing ache, then as a stabbing pain in his head and with the pain came the dim memory of the blinding light, the blow and oblivion. What had happened? What had fallen from above to strike him? Why was it so dark? Why did he feel suffocating? Had the lights gone out? Was he still pinned under the object which had hit him?

Perhaps, he thought, there had been an accident, a collision. Perhaps, even now, the destroyer was sinking. He strove to turn his head, to rise, and then, for the first time, he suddenly realized that his head was enveloped in the heavy choking folds of a blanket, that his arms were pinioned behind his back and with the discovery came the terrifying knowledge that he had been struck by some one; stunned, gagged, and bound by some enemy.

But, by whom? Who upon the destroyer could have done this? Who had been hiding in the room and for what reason?

Choking for breath, still dazed from the blow on his head, frightened and sick, feeling as if every breath under the smothering cloth must be his last, Tom nevertheless thought of the others. The vessel and his friends must be in danger; there must be mutiny afoot, and he groaned to think that he could not warn



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the others; could not even cry out. Then, suddenly he forgot all, forgot his aching dizzy head, his gasping, choking lungs, his terror and his plight, for through the folds of the blanket the sounds of a human voice came dimly to him. And, as Tom's straining ears caught the words, he could scarcely believe he was not in a delirium. Terror froze the blood in his veins.

"Everything correct," came faintly through the cloth. "We'll fix the gear so she'll go on the rocks in the Bocas. Yes, all out of it but this and I'll fix this in a minute more. Oh, yes. Pretty near caught. Fool boy bobbed up unexpectedly. Knocked him out. Oh, no, toss him overboard presently. No, no trace."

Then silence—and Tom, knowing his end was near, that in a few short moments he would be cast, bound, gagged and helpless into the black water, prayed for unconsciousness, prayed for oblivion that would end his sufferings. But the very terror of his fate kept his mind active and his senses alive, while each short, gasping breath he drew sent surges of awful, crashing pain through his temples and he felt as though his eyes were bulging from the sockets.

Then he felt himself roughly seized and being carried away bodily. He knew that in another in-



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stant he would find himself falling, would feel the cold waters close over him. Summoning all his fast ebbing strength, he uttered a piercing scream and once more lost consciousness.

Muffled by the blanket about his head, Tom's last despairing cry could not have been heard ten feet away; but it was enough. Less than ten feet off, Sam the Bahaman was at that instant approaching the room, passing through the alleyway. At the boy's smothered cry, he leaped to the door, flung it open and with a savage yell sprang at the figure about to throw the apparently lifeless boy through the open gun port.

So swift and silent had been Sam's response to Tom's cry that the negro's yell was the first warning Tom's captor had of the Bahaman's approach. Startled, taken utterly by surprise, he dropped the boy's body, whipped out a revolver and whirled about. But Sam, with head lowered, had hurled himself like a catapult across the room. Before the other could even aim his weapon, the negro's head struck him squarely in the stomach with the force of a battering ram. With a gasping, awful gurgle the man doubled up and shot through the open gun port into the sea. Sam, carried forward by his own momentum, grasped the gun carriage and saved him-

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self in the nick of time from plunging into the water after the writhing body of his victim.

The Bahaman gave one glance through the open barrette at the racing, black, foam-flecked waves and then, with a grin of satisfaction, he sprang to Tom's side, whipped off the blanket, and tore loose the bonds about his wrists. Lifting the unconscious boy in his powerful black arms, he raced with him to the deck and to the room where Tom's father and the others were chatting, all oblivious of the tragedy which had taken place beneath their feet.

To their frenzied questions as they worked feverishly over Tom, Sam could give but very vague and unsatisfactory replies. "Ah jus' cotch tha' soun' of tha' young gen'man's cry, Chief," he told Mr. Pauling. "An' Ah knowed tha' mus' be trouble for he an' burs' into the room. An Ah seed tha' Englishman jus' mekkin' fo' to heave he out the gun po't, Chief."

"Englishman!" cried Mr. Pauling. "What Englishman?"

"Tha' English sailor man, Chief," replied Sam.

"You don't mean Robinson!" exclaimed Mr. Pauling. "Where is he? What happened?"

"Yaas, Chief, tha' officer we picked up in tha' boat, Chief. He's finish, Chief. Ah don' rightly know

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where he gone, but Ah' 'spec tha' sharks got he."

"Suffering cats!" cried out Rawlins. "Did you knock him overboard?"

Sam grinned. "Yaas, Sir," he replied. "Leastwise, when Ah seed he mekkin' to heave the young gen'man out, Ah jus' butted he afore he could mek to shoot an Ah 'spec Ah butted he pretty hard, fo' he jus' mek one good grunt an' scooned out o' tha' po't like Davy Jones was callin' he."

"You old black rascal!" cried Rawlins, slapping Sam on the back. "I'll say you butted him good—and I'll bet he 'scooned.' Why, by glory, I'd rather be kicked by a mule than butted by that kinky head of yours."

"Jove, but this is a mystery!" exclaimed Mr. Henderson. "The fellow must have gone crazy suddenly. Why on earth should he wish to injure Tom?"

"Perhaps Tom can tell us, when he comes to," suggested Commander Disbrow. "Ah, he's all right, he'll be out of his faint in a moment."

Presently Tom's eyes opened and he looked about, a wild, uncomprehending expression on his face. Then, realizing that he really was among his friends, that his father was bending over him and that he

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had not been thrown into the sea, he smiled and closing his eyes, took a long deep breath.

When again he looked up, he was fully conscious and to his father's anxious queries declared he felt all right except weak and that his head ached. Then, for the first time, the others discovered the great bruised lump upon his head and as it was being bandaged Tom told his amazing story.

"The scoundrel!" cried Mr. Pauling. "I can't understand it. Whom was he talking to in the room?"

"In the room!" fairly shouted Rawlins. "Don't you see it all, Mr. Pauling? He was talking to those blamed "reds." The whole thing's a frame up. They weren't shipwrecked at all. The *Devonshire* never was held up. It was all a trick and I said I had a hunch it was at the time. They just got aboard us to give them a chance to wreck the destroyer and get away. He put the radio sets out of commission and left the boys' set 'til the last so he could call to his friends."

Before Rawlins had uttered a dozen words, the Commander had slipped from the room and before the diver had ended he had given low-toned orders and commands.

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"By Jove, I guess you're right!" exclaimed Mr. Pauling. "But still, we got that cable from Trinidad this morning. The *Devonshire* must be there."

Rawlins snorted. "Cable nothing!" he replied. "That was a fake—sent by the same bunch to head us for Trinidad. Didn't Tom hear him say they'd fix our gear to put us on the rocks in the Bocas? Why, by gravy, they may be hanging around within sight of us now! There never was a *Devonshire*. They just dropped off from the sub in our course and pretended to be adrift. I'll bet the old sub wasn't fifty yards away when we took 'em aboard."

"And we thought they'd fallen into our trap!" ejaculated Mr. Henderson. "And we were the ones who were caught."

"A miss is as good as a mile," Rawlins reminded him. "And we're not caught yet. We'll fool 'em still and land 'em if I have to follow them to Kingdom Come. Say, we'd better get the rest of that bunch rounded up before they do anything or get wise to Robinson being bumped off."

"They're attended to," announced Commander Disbrow, as he reëntered the room. "Every mother's son of them is safe in double irons."

"Bully for you!" cried Rawlins. "Now let's put



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our heads together and see how we'll nab the rest of the bunch."

"There we're up against it," declared Mr. Pauling. "If we could make any of the prisoners confess, we might find out their plans, although I doubt if they know them. And we haven't the least idea as to where the submarine is. I think it's about hopeless."

"I'll be shot if 'tis," declared the diver. "That fake British rascal was going to get off with a whole skin with his gang somewhere. You can bet he wouldn't risk his dirty neck when we went on the rocks. All we've got to do is pretend to fall in with their plans, keep on for Trinidad, and watch developments. There was some plan to get this bunch off before we got there and we're boobs if we can't get on to it."

"Yes, no doubt you're right," agreed Mr. Pauling. "But still I'm doubtful of success. The criminal always has the advantage in a case of this sort for he knows his own plans and makes them while knowing more or less of his pursuers' plans and movements, whereas the authorities know nothing of his and must go largely by guess work. Possibly the boys might send some message—asking for further

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orders or pretending the exact plans had not gone through—and so get information.”

“No, that would give us away at once,” declared Rawlins. “They knew the radio instruments were all disabled and that Robinson, or whatever his real name was, intended to fix the boys’ set as soon as he was through talking, and now if we start butting in on radio again, they’ll shy off.”

“But what did he mean about fixing the gear and the Bocas?” asked Tom.

“The Bocas are the narrow channels leading into the Gulf of Paria from the Caribbean,” explained the Commander. “The tide runs swiftly and there are dangerous rocky shores on either side. If a ship’s steering gear or engines go wrong there, she’ll pile on the rocks in a moment. I expect the rascals planned to monkey with the steering gear—though how I can’t imagine. I’ve a gang of machinists and engineers going over every part of the ship now. No knowing but they may have done something already.”

“And to think we pitied them and thought them shipwrecked sailors!” exclaimed Frank.

“Yes, and I was fool enough to give away some of our plans,” lamented Mr. Pauling. “No doubt

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that confounded faker told them all to his friends on the sub.”

“But you didn’t tell him the secret cipher you used in notifying the authorities,” said Mr. Henderson. “How do you imagine they discovered it and managed to get the message to you?”

“I don’t think they did,” replied Mr. Pauling. “The cable came in in English and I had no suspicions. As long as the *Devonshire* and its crew were supposedly taken, I assumed that there was no further need for secrecy and that the officials used a plain message for that reason.”

“Hmm, I see,” mused the other. “I wonder where it was really sent from.”

“Probably not sent at all,” declared Rawlins. “More likely a plain fake from beginning to end, written right in Dominica and never saw the cable office.”

“Well, what are we going to do with this gang we’ve got in the brig?” inquired the Commander. “Take them to Trinidad?”

“I think the best and first thing is to question them,” replied Mr. Pauling. “By taking them one at a time we may learn something.”

Accordingly, the men were brought up, shackled

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and under guard, and Mr. Pauling and Mr. Henderson, who were past masters at the art of wringing damaging admissions from criminals, questioned each of the surly lot at length. But all their efforts to secure information amounted to but little. The men declared they knew nothing of the plans of their leaders; every one maintained that the story of the seizure of the *Devonshire* was gospel truth and all professed entire innocence of any wrong doing. No amount of cross questioning or threatening shook their story and not one made a statement which conflicted with another's.

"They're the most accomplished set of liars I ever ran across," declared Mr. Pauling, "and the worst of it is, we really haven't an atom of evidence or proof against them. If the *Devonshire* never turned up, they could claim that she had been sunk by the 'reds' and our own evidence as to the past activities of the villains would lend color to these fellows' tale. Even the fact that Robinson plotted or planned to destroy us or that he was in league with those on the sub would not affect these men. They could hold that he was planted on the *Devonshire* and the rest of her crew knew nothing of it."

"Yes, that's very true," admitted the Commander,

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"but I would suggest we put into Barbados and leave this crowd there. Possibly the Admiralty Courts may be able to hold them on some charge."

"I would, but for the fact that if, as Rawlins thinks, the sub is watching us, our going to Barbados would arouse their suspicions and as long as there is a remote chance of getting the leaders I'm going to take it," replied Mr. Pauling.

As he finished speaking, Bancroft and the boys appeared.

"We've found the trouble with the radio!" cried Tom. "And it's all right now. They'd cut the lead-in wire where it passed through an insulating tube and had spliced the insulation together, and on the radio compass they'd taken out a section of wire and replaced it with a bit of stick covered with the insulation where it was connected to a binding post."

"I'll say they're clever rascals!" exclaimed Rawlins. "Well, we can hear any messages they send now even if we don't want to send."

"Personally, I'm sorry that Sam butted that man Robinson overboard," remarked Mr. Pauling who had been deep in thought. "He's bobbed up twice in the nick of time to save your life, Tom, and each time he's killed a man who would have been more valua-



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ble alive than dead. Not that I blame him—I owe him a greater debt than I can ever hope to repay—but I do wish that if he's destined to rescue you from every scrape you get into that he could do it without always destroying our evidence. I'd give a great deal to have a chance to put a few questions to that Robinson."

"And I'll bet my boots to a tin whistle he wouldn't have come across with any information," declared Rawlins. "I've been putting two and two together and I've a hunch he's the chap who called himself a 'Yank' when the boys heard him talking on the tramp back in St. John. He was too blamed clever to give away anything and maybe, after all, these men *are* telling the truth and he was planted on the *Devonshire* and his friends seized the ship. That would account for their letting Robinson and a boat's crew get away—just to board us you see. By glory, it's such a mixed-up plot within a plot that it's sure got me guessing."

"Jove, that may be so," cried Mr. Henderson. "If so, it would explain several puzzles. He may have intended to escape alone and let the rest of the crowd sink or swim with us. 'Twould have been fairly easy for him to do that—just drop over the

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side and be picked up by the sub at some prearranged spot—whereas a crowd of twenty-two men would have a hard job to clear out undetected.”

“Well, he dropped over all right,” chuckled the diver. “Only I’ll bet the sub wasn’t standing by to pick him up.”

“Perhaps we can solve part of the mystery when we reach Trinidad,” said Mr. Pauling. “If the *Devonshire* is overdue, we can be fairly sure she was seized. Whereas if she arrives with her real officers and crew, we’ll know it was all a frame-up. But we’ll owe an apology to her company in that case.”

Rawlins uttered an ejaculation and springing up rushed from the room.

“Well, I wonder what’s struck him now!” exclaimed Mr. Henderson.

“Another hunch, probably,” laughed the Commander. “He seems full of them.”

“And usually pretty near the truth at that,” put in Mr. Pauling.

Five minutes later the diver reappeared. “Some one please kick me for a blamed dub!” he exclaimed. “Here we’ve been backing and filling and talking and discussing and guessing and we might have found out the truth in a minute at any time.”

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"If you'll tell us what you're driving at, we may understand," said Mr. Pauling. "What's this new discovery of yours?"

"That this bunch we've got on board are all blamed liars!" replied the diver. "There isn't any such ship as the *Devonshire*. At least none that corresponds with their story. I've just gone through Lloyds' Registry and there are only three British ships of the name. One's a wooden bark, the other's a little coasting steamer and the third's a big liner."

"By Jove!" ejaculated Mr. Henderson.

"You'd better kick me too!" laughed the Commander. "I'm ready to join your boob society at any time, Rawlins. I'd hate to have the rest of the navy hear of this. Here I'm supposed to use that registry for looking up ships and I never thought of it when the need came."

"Well, we're none of us infallible," Mr. Henderson reminded him. "However, that's one point settled. The next thing—"

At this instant a lieutenant dashed into the room and saluted. "Submarine on the starboard bow!" he announced.

## CHAPTER V

### THE END OF THE SUBMARINE

**A**T the officer's words every one leaped up and dashed on deck, scarcely knowing what to expect, for the appearance of a submarine was the last thing any had dreamed of and all felt sure the sub-sea craft must be the one they sought. For a moment they gazed upon an apparently bare sea, then, half a mile away, they caught a glimpse of a dark object resembling the water-logged hull of a ship as it lifted against the sky on a long roller. Already the destroyer's men were at the forward gun and with every one excited and expectant, the little ship bore down upon the submarine.

"By glory, they must be going to surrender!" cried Rawlins. "If they weren't, they'd submerge."

"Then why in thunder don't they signal?" exclaimed the Commander.

Turning, he barked out an order and a moment later, a string of bright flags rose to the destroyer's stubby mast.

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But there was no response from the submarine, —no answering signal.

“There’s something fishy about her!” declared Rawlins. “Guess they’ve got something up their sleeves!”

“They won’t pull any monkey shines with me, hang them!” burst out Commander Disbrow. Then, to the expectant gunner, “Put a shot alongside of her!”

Hardly were the words uttered, when the decks shook to the roar of the gun and a huge column of water rose like a geyser a few feet from the submarine.

“That ought to wake them up!” cried Mr. Henderson.

“But it didn’t!” exclaimed the diver who was staring through his glasses. “By glory, they must all be dead!”

The destroyer had now drawn within a few hundred feet of the submarine and still there was no sign of life, no signal displayed upon the wallowing craft ahead.

“I don’t like to sink her out of hand,” mused Commander Disbrow, “but I’ll be hanged if I’ll board her until I know what’s up. See if you



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can chip a bit off her conning tower, Flannigan."

The big Irish gunner looked up and grinned as he saluted. "Thot Oi will, Sor!" he replied as he carefully trained his gun.

And as, at the crashing report, the top of the submarine's conning tower vanished in a puff of smoke and a spurt of flame, the watchers cheered lustily.

"I'll be sunk!" shouted Rawlins when even this failed to bring any response from the submarine. "They are dead—or else she's deserted!"

"Have a boat lowered away!" ordered the Commander turning to the young lieutenant, "and board that sub with an armed crew. Don't take chances. If you find any one, take them dead or alive—and be sure you get the drop on them first!"

A moment later the boat was in the water, the armed bluejackets tumbled into her and in the lee of the destroyer rapidly bore down on the sub-sea craft while those on the destroyer watched them with every nerve tense with excitement. They saw the boat draw alongside the submarine, saw the officer and two men scramble on to the water-washed deck and saw them cautiously approach the hatch with drawn pistols. Then they disappeared and all waited breathlessly,

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expecting to see them emerge with their captives. But when, a moment later, they again came into view they were alone and gaining their boat headed back for the destroyer.

"I'll say she's deserted!" cried Rawlins. "By glory, those rascals are leaving a regular trail of deserted boats behind them. First the sub off New York, then the schooner in the Bahamas, then that sub in Santo Domingo and now this one! Suffering cats! They must have subs to burn!"

"Well, if they've abandoned this one, I'd like to know what they're on now," declared Mr. Pauling. "Perhaps they *did* seize some other ship after all."

"We'll know in a moment what's up," said Mr. Henderson as the boat swept alongside.

"Forward starboard plates are stove in, Sir," announced the lieutenant as he approached and saluted the Commander. "Appears to have been in collision. She's half full of water and several bodies floating about inside."

"By Jove!" cried Mr. Pauling. "They've met their deserts at last! Well, it's saved us the trouble of following farther. I suppose you did not notice the bodies sufficiently to describe them, Lieutenant."

"Unrecognizable, Sir," replied the young officer.

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"Evidently suffocated by gas from the batteries when the water reached them. Not pleasant to look at, Sir, but appeared to be members of the engine room crew from their clothing."

"Hmm, then I'm afraid we'll never know if the leaders survived or not," mused Mr. Pauling. "Too bad, but it can't be helped. I guess there's nothing else, Disbrow, except to land this gang we have in Trinidad—I suppose that's the nearest port."

"Yes, it's the nearest," agreed the Commander, "but we'll sink that sub first. She's a menace to navigation."

A moment later the gun roared again and once again. Fragments of steel plates and twisted iron mingled with the upflung water as the bursting shells struck true and the shattered submarine sank to her last resting place to form the tomb of those who had come to their death within her. Now that the submarine had been destroyed there was no chance of hearing the truth of the plans which had been made to rescue Robinson and his fellow plotters from the destroyer and all possible speed was made for Trinidad.

But Rawlins was still skeptical. "I've a hunch that old boy with the monocle didn't go down with

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that sub," he declared as the blue waters changed to a dull muddy brown from the mouth of the Orinoco nearly one hundred miles distant. "I'll bet he and Red Whiskers and some others got away and saved their hides. They may have been picked up or they might even have made land. And I'd like to know what became of that blamed seaplane."

"If they were picked up they'll be reported," declared Mr. Pauling. "When we reach Trinidad, we can send out a general alarm to hold them wherever they arrive; but personally I believe they're dead. If the sub was in collision, she must have been run down at night and in that case all below were probably suffocated. The fact that there were only a few bodies visible proves nothing, for there may have been many more in the rooms or out of sight. Of course, the plane is unaccounted for, but I imagine they left her somewhere and all took to the sub long before it was disabled. You see, we have no proof that it was used after leaving Aves—now that we know Robinson's story was pure falsehood."

"Maybe," was the diver's comment. "But I'm still from Missouri."

When the boys came on deck the following morn-

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ing, the lofty mountains of Venezuela loomed above the yellow-brown water ahead with blue-green hills stretching far to east and west.

"Gosh! it doesn't seem possible we're looking at South America," exclaimed Frank. "Where's Trinidad, Mr. Rawlins?"

"There to the east," replied the diver. "Those mountains to the west are at the tip of Venezuela, those lower green hills dead ahead are the islands at the Bocas, and only the northern end of Trinidad and those faint misty mountains in the distance are visible from here."

Gradually, the apparently solid land ahead seemed to break up; narrow openings of water showed between the hills and presently the destroyer was steaming through the famous Bocas leading from the Caribbean into the great Gulf of Paria.

"Golly, this *would* be a nasty place to have anything go wrong!" exclaimed Tom as the little ship passed between the jagged, rocky islands and reefs that lined the waterway. "Maybe I'm not glad I surprised that fellow."

"Don't think you're the only one that is," said Rawlins. "And Disbrow isn't dead sure something may not be wrong yet. Look at the way he's got



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men at the anchors and the way he's just crawling along."

But nothing happened, the destroyer passed through the Bocas in safety, and, as the great bulk of Trinidad loomed ahead, the boys forgot everything else in their interest in watching the beauties unfolding as they steamed across the Gulf towards Port of Spain. They could scarcely believe that the ranges of lofty, cloud-topped mountains, the far-reaching valleys and the interminable shores stretching away in the dim distance were on an island and not a continent. When they mentioned this, Commander Disbrow explained that Trinidad really is a bit of the tip of South America cut off only by the narrow Bocas at the two ends of the Gulf of Paria.

"It's wonderful," declared Tom, "but still I don't like it as well as Dominica. Somehow it seems more natural for a place as big as this to have all those mountains, but Dominica's so different from anything I ever imagined that it fascinated me."

"And this is too much to take in," added Frank. "Dominica was like a picture that you could see all at once. Are there any interesting things here?"

"There's the Pitch Lake," replied Rawlins. "Only it's not a lake, but a big bed of asphalt, and

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oil wells, and some fine water falls, and the Blue Basin."

"Well, I hope Dad lets us stay a day or two so we can see the place," said Tom. "Is the Pitch Lake near the town?"

"No—down at the other end of the island," replied the diver. "You can go by train and steamer or by motor car. You'll find it a queer spot, but hotter than blazes. When I used to come down here with Father, he sometimes loaded asphalt at Brighton—that's the port of the Asphalt company—and I was always mighty glad to get away. I'll say it's the hottest place in this world!"

They were now approaching the harbor and as Mr. Pauling had radioed ahead that he had prisoners to be turned over to the authorities, a police boat manned by gigantic black "bobbies" was waiting for the destroyer when she at last dropped anchor off Port of Spain.

As the pompous, florid-faced inspector, followed by his half-dozen black giants, boarded the destroyer the usual fleet of shore boats drew close.

"Here, you!" cried Rawlins beckoning to one darky. "Hand me up a paper."

Tossing a shilling to the fellow, the diver seized

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the *Gazette* and turned eagerly to the column headed "Maritime News."

"Here 'tis!" he exclaimed, as he ran his eye rapidly over the various items.

"Barbados, 29th. Steamship *Trident*, La Guaira for European ports, put in with leak in port bow. Reports being in collision with what appeared to be a water-logged derelict on the night of 27th. Longitude 62° 58' W. Latitude 12° 35' N. Captain Donaldson states that he believes there were men clinging to the derelict as officer on watch insists he heard cries after striking, but no trace of men or of the derelict could be found although the *Trident* stood by and burned flares for half an hour.

"But how do you know that's about the steamer that struck the submarine?" asked Tom.

"I don't *know*," admitted the diver. "But I'll bet a five spot to a plugged nickel it is, just the same. It's the same position—or at least within a few miles of it—as where we found the old sub. It'd be blamed funny if there was a derelict and that sub knocking about the same spot. Anyhow the *Trident* didn't pick any one up so I guess my hunch was wrong about Old Glass Eye getting off."

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While Rawlins had been speaking, Frank had been examining the paper and suddenly he let out a yell that made the others jump.

"Jehoshaphat!" he cried. "Just listen to this!" Then while the others listened he read:

### TO EXPLORE JUNGLES IN AIRSHIP

Demerara, Tuesday. The steamship *Devon* which arrived yesterday brought to our shores Messrs. LaVerne and Dewar who plan a unique expedition into the hinterland. Messrs. LaVerne and Dewar brought with them on the *Devon* the latest type of hydroplane or flying boat with which they will explore the unknown interior of the Colony. Their aircraft excited the admiration and wonder of everybody as the two intrepid men got safely off and rising gracefully from the surface of the Demerara River soared like a great bird above the tree tops and disappeared in the direction of the unknown solitudes. We understand that Messrs. LaVerne and Dewar are conducting their expedition in the interests of a large British and American syndicate which is interested in the development of the Colony's resources. We wish the gentlemen every success and a safe return.

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"By the great horn spoon, that's them!" shouted Rawlins. "Steamship *Devon*. Well I'll be sunk! By glory! How that Robinson did fool us! And while those chaps were watching for the *Devonshire* which didn't exist they let the blamed *Devon* come in and those two devils fly away and never even smelled a rat!"

"Then you mean—" began Tom.

But Rawlins had grabbed the paper and had rushed to the room where Mr. Pauling and the others were talking earnestly with the Inspector of Police.

"I'll say they lied after all!" he burst out, as the men jumped up in surprise at his unexpected appearance. "It was the *Devon* they seized—not the *Devonshire*! And she's got in and landed the confounded plane and those two precious scoundrels and got safe away again! Here 'tis, plain as can be!"

Eagerly, Mr. Pauling seized the proffered paper and read the despatch from Demerara and even the apoplectic inspector, who had seemed about to explode with outraged dignity at Rawlins' impetuous interruption of the conference, forgot his ruffled feelings and scowled fiercely at the unoffending sheet over Mr. Pauling's shoulder.

"Jove, you're right!" declared Mr. Pauling at last.



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"A coincidence of that sort would be impossible. We've been tricked again, Henderson. Outplayed. But it may not be too late yet. Have Bancroft radio to hold the *Devon*."

"No use now!" announced Rawlins. "She sailed day before yesterday. Look down in the Maritime News and you'll find it. And there's another item there—it was the *Trident* that rammed the sub."

"But, but, my good man!" spluttered the inspector. "You can capture her. She cannot be far away you know!"

"No?" replied the diver questioningly. "Not in miles perhaps, but where? Did she sail north, east, south or west? The sea's a mighty big place and a ship's a mighty small thing to find on it—especially when she don't want to be found. And what's her name now? You can bet your bottom dollar she isn't the *Devon* any longer."

"But really, really, my good man, I'm not accustomed to being addressed in that manner, Sir!" burst out the inspector. "I'd have you understand I'm the Inspector of Police, Sir. Why, who under the sun are you anyway, Sir?"

"I'm a poor boob that thought you fellows down here had common sense!" retorted Rawlins hotly.

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“Why the dickens didn’t they have brains enough to think of *Devon* and *Devonshire* being too blamed much alike?”

“Come, come, Rawlins!” exclaimed Mr. Pauling in mollifying tones. “Major May is not to blame and I suppose there really was no reason for suspecting the *Devon* to be the *Devonshire*.”

Then, turning to the purple-faced officer. “Major,” he said, “let me introduce Mr. Rawlins. He’s our guide, philosopher, and friend, if I may quote a hackneyed saying. I don’t know what we’d do without him. He and the boys are really responsible for all we’ve accomplished and he’s famous for his hunches.”

Rawlins grinned and grasped the inspector’s hand and the latter, as quick to recover his temper as to lose it, smiled under his bristling white mustache. “Jolly glad to know you!” he declared. “Sorry if I offended you and all that. Bit peppery I expect—India and liver, you know. Curry, and all that sort of thing. Ah, yes—and the hunches—’pon my word, never heard of them. Sort of cocktail, are they not?”

The diver could not restrain his merriment and Mr. Pauling and the others grew scarlet.

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"Not quite, Major," Rawlins managed to reply. "Don't know if I can explain it—Yankee term, sort of slang, meaning a premonition or something like it, a—well a hunch you know."

But the splenetic old veteran could take a joke even if on himself and roared with laughter at his own error.

"Jolly good thing, that about the *Devon*," he declared when all were on good terms once more. "Now we have a proper charge against these rascals you have. Couldn't see my way before—with no such ship as the bally old *Devonshire*. Couldn't accuse them of doing away with a ship that didn't exist, you know. All different now, though. Well, I must be off. Anything I can do, just call on me. Any plans in view?"

"I'll say we'd better beat it for Demerara," declared Rawlins before Mr. Pauling could reply. "If those devils are off in that seaplane, we may get 'em yet. They've got to land somewhere and they've got to come back. They can't fly clean across South America without gas."

"Righto!" agreed the inspector. "Cousin of mine inspector there, you know. Give him my regards. Good chap, Philip, rather new to his job, of

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course, and all that sort of thing—but smart chap. Yes, he'll do anything to help you, rather!"

"Now, what's this big idea about going to Demerara?" asked Mr. Pauling, after the inspector had left accompanied by his men and with the surly prisoners securely handcuffed.

"Why, my idea is just this," the diver explained. "Those two rascals have beat it for the interior in their plane. Of course, they were that slick guy with the monocle and old Red Whiskers—but you know as well as I do that they're not exploring or in the interests of any syndicate. But I will say they've got some sense of humor at that—'big American and British syndicate,' by glory! They're half telling the truth at that—the 'reds' are *some* syndicate, I'll tell the world! But that trip of theirs is just bluff. They've just gone up in the bush a ways to lie low until we've dropped off their trail. And I'll say they had some everlasting nerve to use the name *Devonshire* and run the risk of the bobbies over there getting suspicious when the *Devon* came in. Expect it was so the crew wouldn't have trouble in remembering it. Well, as I was saying, they'll hide out in the bush or, by Jimminy, they may be headed for Dutch Guiana! But, whatever it is, a

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plane can't go snooping around Guiana without attracting attention and we can trail 'em easy."

"Admitting all that is true, as it no doubt is, whose attention is the plane going to attract and how do you propose trailing them?" asked Mr. Pauling.

"Also," he added, "what makes you think the *Devon* was seized? Perhaps, the two took passage on her from some port with their plane."

"I'll answer the last question first," replied the diver. "A couple of chaps don't go touring around the West Indies carrying a seaplane in their hand-bag and if they'd appeared suddenly at some port, as if flying around, the paper would have mentioned it. Trust the skipper of the *Devon*—if he'd been genuine—to make a good yarn out of it. Besides, if they hadn't seized the ship, how the deuce would Robinson have thought of using the same name and just tacking a 'shire' on it? If he'd been straight—or rather if they'd just boarded the *Devon* as you suggest—he'd have said *Devon*. And there's that Anannias Club we just sent ashore. We know they lied because there wasn't any *Devonshire* or I'd think they were survivors from the *Devon*. But as long as they weren't, then they're part of the gang. The only thing that gets me is where they stowed away a



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big enough crew on the sub to send twenty-two men aboard us and have enough left to man the *Devon*. And now about the other questions. The Indians are the ones who'll see the plane and you can bet your boots they'll all see it—think the Great Spirit himself's coming I expect. By talking to a few of the Indians, we can trail that old plane as easy as if they were blazing their way."

"But you forget Guiana is a big territory and a plane can hide anywhere on the rivers," objected Mr. Pauling. "No, Rawlins, I'm afraid they've given us the slip for good."

"Yes, I agree with you there," declared Mr. Henderson, "but I do think it may be well to run over to Demerara. We can have a talk with the officials and leave them to apprehend the plane—and the *Devon*, if it comes back."

"Very well," assented Mr. Pauling. "It's two to one, so I agree. Disbrow, we might as well get under way for Demerara."

## CHAPTER VI

### IN SOUTH AMERICA

**A**LTHOUGH the two boys were woefully disappointed at not being able to see anything of Trinidad, yet the fact that they were going to Demerara and would actually have a chance to see something of South America more than made up for it.

Rawlins assured them that in British Guiana they would find a far more interesting spot than Trinidad and the boys plied him with questions.

“Isn’t that the place the blow gun and those poisoned arrows came from?” asked Tom.

“Sure thing,” replied the diver. “I don’t know much about the country—except what I’ve read and been told—but I’ve been at Georgetown, or Demerara as it’s called, and you’ll find enough to keep you busy right there.”

“Gosh, then there must be wild Indians there—if they use blow guns,” said Frank. “Will we be able to see any of them?”

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"Country's full of them," declared Rawlins. "But they're all peaceable. If we go trailing that plane into the bush as I want Mr. Pauling to do, you'll see Indians all right. If we don't, you may see a few in town. I've always wanted to get into the interior myself. It's a wonderful place—most of it unexplored—and there's gold and diamonds and wild animals and the highest waterfall in the world."

"Now don't get these boys all worked up over it, Rawlins," laughed Mr. Pauling. "If we don't look out, they'll mutiny and refuse to go home until they've had their fill of sightseeing. I admit I'd like nothing better than to stretch my legs ashore for a time and see something of the country, but this is no pleasure jaunt, you know."

"But if those men are there, we could go after them and then it wouldn't be a pleasure trip," argued Tom.

"You can be sure it would not," replied his father. "It's bad enough trailing those scoundrels all over the Caribbean, let alone trying to run them to earth in a tropical jungle. No, I think our chase ends at Georgetown."

But Rawlins was not to be readily discouraged.

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He was a most persistent character and having once made up his mind to follow the "Reds" to "Kingdom Come," as he put it, he was not easily to be dissuaded. "I'll say it would be a blamed shame to give up now," he declared. "We've got 'em narrowed down to two and the plane (the bunch on the *Devon* don't count) and those two are the chaps you want, Mr. Pauling. We've got 'em on the run—smoked 'em out of every hole they had—chased 'em into the sea and under it and into the air. Now they've played their last trump. We'd be a lot of boobs to let 'em get away with it now."

"But you seem to forget that we haven't the least idea where they are and that Guiana's a big country," Mr. Pauling reminded him. "I've been going over the maps with Henderson and Disbrow and it's hopeless. Why, they may be in Dutch Guiana or Brazil or Venezuela by now. While we were paddling up a few miles of jungle river, that plane could be flying a couple of hundred miles. It would be worse than chasing a bird with your hat."

"Just the same I've a hunch that we're going to get 'em," declared Rawlins. "And by glory, if you won't go after 'em, I'm going to drop off and go it alone!"

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Mr. Pauling laughed. "Any one would think you had a personal grudge against them," he chuckled.

"So I have—confound them!" cried the diver. "Didn't they cop my diving suit idea and didn't they play a dozen low-down, dirty tricks on us? And weren't they trying to stick a wurali-tipped dart in me back there at St. John? Besides, I've never gone back on one of my hunches yet and it's too late to begin now."

"Well, we'll see what we find out over at Georgetown, before we decide," said Mr. Pauling. "After I talk with the officials we can make plans for our next move. For all we know they may have important information."

The destroyer had now left Port of Spain far astern and was passing out through the Bocas to the open sea. Throughout the afternoon she steamed steadily eastward through the muddy water and when the boys came on deck early the following morning there was still no sign of land.

"Where's Demerara?" asked Tom of the lieutenant in charge. "Commander Disbrow said we'd be in by breakfast time, but I don't see a sign of land."

"Straight ahead," replied the officer. "There's the lightship—see, that little schooner there."



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"Yes I see it," said Tom, "but what is it out in the ocean here for?"

The lieutenant laughed. "It's not!" he replied. "We're in the river now. The lightship's on the bar. We'll be slowing down to take on the pilot in a few moments."

"In the river!" exclaimed Frank. "Oh, you're just fooling! How can this be a river when there are no banks?"

"Honest Injun, 'tis though," declared the officer. "The banks are there all right, but they're so low you can't see them and the river's thirty-five miles wide."

"Jimminy crickets!" cried Tom. "Thirty-five miles wide! Say, I thought the Amazon and the Orinoco were the only big rivers down here."

"Oh, this is just a brook compared to the Amazon," said the lieutenant, "but it's wider than the Orinoco. It's really the mouth of two big rivers—the Demerara and the Essequibo. Look, there comes the pilot."

A small boat had put off from the lightship and came bobbing towards the destroyer, which had slowed down, and presently a grizzled old negro came scrambling over the side.

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With all the pomposity and dignity of an admiral he saluted the lieutenant and climbed to the bridge and a moment later the destroyer was steaming once more on its way under the guidance of the incongruous old negro. Presently, far ahead, the boys saw bits of hazy detached land. Then tall chimneys of sugar mills and the slender towers of a wireless station became visible; the detached bits of dull green, which the boys had taken for islands, joined and formed a low green bank, and before they realized it, the boys found they were passing up a wide muddy stream and that roofs, buildings and spires of a large town were just ahead.

"Gosh, isn't everything flat!" exclaimed Frank. "I don't see a hill or a mountain or anything but that line of low brush anywhere. And the town looks as if it were below the water."

"So it is," replied Commander Disbrow. "Or rather it's below the water level. There's a dyke or sea wall to keep the water out, there are canals running through the streets to drain the place and there are big tide gates, or 'kokers' as they call them, which are closed at high tide and opened at low water."

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"Why, it must be like Holland then!" exclaimed Tom.

"It used to be Dutch," explained the Commander, "and the Dutchmen always seem to like to build towns below sea level—sort of habit, I guess—though why they didn't put it on high land up the river a bit gets me. You'll find Dutch names everywhere, too, and old Dutch buildings, and if you went a hundred miles or so up the Essequibo you'd find an old Dutch fort."

The destroyer had now drawn close to the town and a few minutes later was being moored to the government dock.

From the height of the vessel's decks the boys could look right over the buildings. Beyond the sea of roofs and spires they could see waving palms, long avenues of green shade trees and busy, interesting streets and they were fairly crazy to go ashore.

The arrival of an American warship at Demerara was such an unusual event that a huge crowd had collected at the pier and among the multicolored throng of black, white, and yellow were the gold lace and uniforms of officers.

Knowing that his father and the others would be thoroughly occupied in the formalities of an of-

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ficial welcome, Tom asked permission to go ashore with Frank and Rawlins and scarcely was the destroyer moored when the three darted down the gangway and edging through the crowd came out on the noisy, busy street.

"Gee, this is some town!" exclaimed Tom as the three glanced about. "They've automobiles and trolley cars and everything."

"Sure it's some town!" agreed Rawlins. "Come on, let's take a carriage and drive about. We'll see it quicker and better that way."

Tumbling into a rubber-tired Victoria driven by a grinning negro, the diver told him to drive them about Georgetown and out to the botanic station.

The boys were wildly enthusiastic over everything and Rawlins, who was almost as much of a boy as themselves, pointed out the more interesting features of the place. The picturesque Hindu men and women, who, garbed in their native costumes, swarmed everywhere, fascinated the boys. They were delighted with the shady streets, with the cool houses half-hidden in masses of strange tropical flowers, and they reveled in the calm canals spanned by Oriental-looking bridges and filled with pink lotus and water lilies.

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"It's the quaintest, prettiest place I've ever seen!" declared Tom. "And so foreign looking."

"And these bright red roads!" exclaimed Frank. "And all those East Indians! Why, it's like being in another world!"

"And just look at the way all the houses are built on posts or brick pillars!" put in Tom.

"Yes, that's to keep them dry," Rawlins explained. "In the rainy season the streets get flooded at times and so they build their houses on stilts."

But all the other sights they had seen were forgotten when at last they came to the huge botanic station. Here they drove for miles through a veritable tropical forest among gigantic trees, under trailing lianas, beside jungle streams, all of which, as far as appearances went, might have been in the very heart of South America. But everywhere the red earth roads were as smooth and well kept as asphalt, the grass was green and velvety, beds of gorgeous flowers were all about, and all the trees and plants were carefully labeled. Only such things were in evidence to show it was a park or garden and not the untamed wild and when, to the boys' delight, they saw a flock of gaudy parrots feeding overhead and caught a glimpse of huge-billed toucans, they felt as though



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they were actually in the "bush." Everywhere, too, were canals filled with the gigantic leaves and huge flowers of the Victoria Regia lily and at one spot was a lily and lotus-filled lake, bordered with thickets of palms and fairly swarming with herons, egrets, and boat-bills, with a pair of great, scarlet macaws screeching from a dead limb over the water.

"Gosh!" exclaimed Frank. "It's like a zoological garden, only better. Oh, look, look there! What's that?" As he spoke, a great, dark object had risen through the water and with a hissing noise slowly disappeared.

"Only a manatee," laughed Rawlins. "Didn't you recognize it? It was one of those fellows that led you astray in Santo Domingo, you know."

"But I never expected to see one here, right in the town," declared Frank.

"Lots of 'em in here," said the diver, "and plenty of alligators too. But everywhere you go about Georgetown you'll find wild animals and birds. See herons and egrets feeding beside the roads and scarlet ibis on the mud flats alongside the docks. The city's just at the edge of the jungle, you might say, and you could go right through to the Amazon without ever seeing a sign of civilization."

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"Golly, I do hope Dad goes after those fellows!" cried Tom. "After seeing this place I'm just crazy to see the real jungle."

"And Indians!" added Frank.

"Well, I've a hunch he's going," declared Rawlins. "I'll bet a dollar to a sixpence we're all in the jungle inside of three days."

From the gardens they drove through a picturesque village, swarming with East Indians, to the seawall, then through the town to the market, out to a big sugar estate with miles of enormous royal palms bordering the road, and finally to the museum where they spent an hour or more looking at the collections of native birds, animals, insects and Indian curios.

When at last they boarded the destroyer in time for lunch, they found Mr. Pauling and Mr. Henderson in earnest conversation with a tall, lean-faced, quiet man dressed in spotless white and a short, roly-poly, red-faced officer who wore a gorgeous uniform and whose enormous, fiercely twisted mustaches belied the merry twinkle in his eyes.

"It's all right, Tom, come in, and you too, Frank, and you, Rawlins," cried Mr. Pauling, as Tom, who had burst impetuously into the room, saw that his

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father was engaged and hastened to withdraw. "This is Colonel Maidely," he continued, introducing the officer, "and this is Mr. Thorne. We've been discussing Rawlins' idea of going into the bush after those rascals. By the way, Rawlins, I told the Colonel your opinion of him for letting the *Devon* slip by and he's prepared to take a good dressing down!"

The jovial officer laughed heartily. "'Pon my word I deserve it!" he declared. "Jolly stupid of me, eh? Fact was we were all so interested in the two chaps with the plane we were careless—yes, I'll admit it. Wager you if it hadn't been for that we'd have suspected her. Jolly clever idea that—pulling the wool over our eyes with the airship! And my word! What nerve, as you Yankees say—using a name as much like *Devon* as *Devonshire*! But we'll get her yet, old dear—don't worry."

"And I'm beginning to think your idea is worth trying, Rawlins," went on Mr. Pauling. "Mr. Thorne here is an explorer—just came in from a long trip through the interior, and the Colonel says he knows more about the bush than the Indians themselves. He says it will be easy to trace the plane—just as you did—and he seems to think that in all probability they landed somewhere and will await

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word from their confederates that we've abandoned the chase when they can safely come out of hiding."

"Hurrah!" shouted Tom, quite forgetful of the strangers' presence. "Then we *are* going into the bush!"

"Provided I can induce Mr. Thorne to accompany us," said his father. "None of us knows anything about the interior and we'd be helplessly at sea."

"Oh, you will go, won't you?" begged Frank. "We're crazy to see Indians and wild animals and everything."

The explorer smiled at the boys' enthusiasm. "I'm inclined to think I will," he replied. "I had hoped to go to the States next week—my work is done—but I'm anxious to be of any service I can to Uncle Sam, as well as to my British Colonial friends, and I'm still young enough in spirit, if not in years, to love adventure and excitement, and this trip promises both. Yes, Mr. Pauling, you can count on me and the sooner we get off the better."

"Hurrah! Hip hurrah!" yelled the two boys, fairly dancing with joy.

"Bully for you!" cried Rawlins grasping Mr. Thorne's hand. "I'll say you're a good sport."

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Didn't I tell you we'd be in the bush in three days, boys?"

"Well I hope the rest of your hunch comes true as quickly," laughed Mr. Pauling. "I've been telling the Colonel and Mr. Thorne about your famous hunches and the way they've saved the day so many times."

"Bet you didn't tell them about the inspector over at Trinidad thinking they were a new Yankee drink!" chuckled the diver.

"My word, that *is* rich!" choked Colonel Maidely when the laughter had subsided, "Jolly good joke! Just like old May—wait 'til I tell that to His Excellency and to Philip! By Jove, yes!"

Mr. Thorne rose. "I'll be starting things going," he announced. "Can you gentlemen be ready to leave to-morrow morning? I think my Indian boys are still here—at least some of them are, and if we get off on to-morrow morning's steamer so much the better."

"We can be ready," Mr. Pauling assured him. "I suppose we had better take a radio outfit along."

"By all means," replied the other. "Doubtless these men with the plane are in touch with events by radio and I count largely on trailing them by that



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means. I understand you boys have a radio compass outfit."

"Better than that," declared Tom. "We've got a resonance coil."

"Well, take it," directed the explorer. "Don't bother about the rest of the outfit—except arms and ammunition and old clothes. I'll see to supplies and camp kit."

"Gosh, isn't it great?" exclaimed Tom after Mr. Thorne had gone. "Just to think we're really going into the jungle!"

"You bet!" agreed Frank.

"And when we get back we can go looking for that loot that they hid," went on Tom, "unless these rascals confess and tell us where it is."

"Jehoshaphat! I'd forgotten all about that," exclaimed Frank.

"You might just as well forget it, once and for all," declared Mr. Pauling, laughing at the boys' enthusiasm. "I don't think even Rawlins has any idea of being able to recover that."

"I'll say I have!" cried the diver. "But it will take some figuring with what we have to go on. But I'm more keen on getting the old High Muck-a-Muck and his mate than finding that loot just now."

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Throughout the rest of the day the boys busied themselves with preparations for their trip, going over their radio instruments and packing the few belongings they were to take with them. Finally, in the evening, when Mr. Pauling and Mr. Henderson left for the reception at Government House, they took another long drive about the town and outlying country with Rawlins. Early the next morning, Mr. Thorne arrived, accompanied by two short, stockily built, broad-faced, brown men, who shouldered the party's baggage and carried it to a waiting cart.

"Everything's arranged," the explorer told Mr. Pauling. "Most of my boys have gone up the river, but I telegraphed for them to be ready and I found a couple of them still in town."

"Why, were those men you brought Indians?" asked Tom in surprise. "I thought they were Chinese or something."

"Akawoias," replied Mr. Thorne. "All the Indians here have a Mongolian appearance."

"Gosh, if I'd known that, I'd have been more interested," declared Frank.

"You'll see them and a lot more for day after day," laughed the explorer, "and you'll find them

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very decent boys. They've been with me for months."

"Do they talk English?" asked Tom.

"Well, not exactly," replied Mr. Thorne. "They have a queer jargon they call 'talky-talky'—something like Pigeon English. You'll learn to speak it easily enough. Now if you're all ready, let's be off. The boat leaves in half an hour."

"By the way," remarked the explorer, as the party left the destroyer and walked up the street towards the dock or "stelling" where the river steamer was moored, "I've a bit of news for you. The seaplane passed over Wismar and was headed almost due south. I think that rather does away with the idea that they were making for Venezuela or Dutch Guiana."

"Hmm," muttered Mr. Pauling. "Is there any place in that vicinity where they could hide?"

"It's the least known district in the entire colony," Mr. Thorne assured him. "Until I explored it, the upper reaches of the Demerara were absolutely unknown—even the source of the river had never been discovered—and between the Berbice and the Essequibo rivers above the Demerara is a vast area of absolutely unexplored territory. They could come

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down anywhere in that district without the slightest chance of being seen—except by Indians—and it's near enough the coast to be in radio communication with a confederate here or a ship at sea. But my own opinion is that their friends are over in Dutch Guiana. Judging by your experiences, they have a particular fondness for the Dutch and Dutch colonies."

"Could they communicate with people there at this distance?" asked Mr. Henderson.

"I don't see why not," replied the explorer. "In a direct line, Paramaribo, the capital and port, is a little over two hundred miles distant. Of course, I do not know the sending range of the plane's outfit, but they could certainly receive and I suppose that's just as important."

"If they've got as good an outfit on the plane as they had on the sub and at St. John they could send twice that distance," declared Tom. "Do you understand radio, Mr. Thorne?"

The explorer smiled, "As Colonel Maidley would say, 'rawther'," he replied. "I don't suppose I'm up-to-date, but it is something of a hobby with me."

"Gee, that's bully!" cried Tom. "Did Dad tell you about our subsea radio?"

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Once started on this subject the two boys and Mr. Thorne forgot all else and held an animated conversation which continued without cessation until they reached the little river steamer and the boys' interests were aroused by new sights.

Never had the two boys seen such an odd, many colored cosmopolitan crowd as thronged the "stelling" and the boat. Swathed in cotton, bare-legged and with their heads covered with immense turbans of red, white, or green the East Indian men stalked about. There were Parsees with their odd embroidered hats; Brahmins with the painted marks of holy men upon their foreheads; fakirs in rags, with long matted hair and beards, carrying their highly polished brass begging bowls and their goatskins as their total possessions; fat, sleek "Baboos" in silk, protecting their turbanned heads under huge, green umbrellas; and East Indian women by the score, ablaze with color and laden down with heavy barbaric jewelry, their wrists, ankles and arms encircled by scores of heavy bands and rings of beaten silver and gold, their sleek, black hair bound with dangling silver and jeweled ornaments, huge golden hoops in their noses—clad, besides, in brilliant embroidered jackets, fluttering gauze veils and silken draperies.



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A chattering, dark-hued throng that transformed the spot to a bit of India. Back and forth among them, elbowed the big, burly negroes—"pork knockers," as Mr. Thorne called them—each carrying his "bat-tell" or gold pan strapped to his pack and all bound for the gold and diamond diggings. Chinese there were too, prosperous merchants in European garments; farmers with huge, saucerlike hats, loose trousers and blouses; Chinese women in flapping, pajamalike costumes, and toddling Chinese kiddies that might have stepped from an Oriental screen. To swell the crowd and add to the multiplicity of nationalities there were sallow Portuguese, mulattoes, quadroons, and octoroons; bronzed English planters; dark-eyed Venezuelans; broad-shouldered, mighty-muscled "Boviander" rivermen; and half a dozen short, deep-chested, stolid-faced native Indians or "bucks," as the explorer told the boys they were called.

And such confusion! Such a chaos of live stock, baggage, squalling babies, and wildly clucking and clacking fowls! How they would ever get straightened out; how they would ever find their own belongings, or how the tiny side-wheel steamer could ever accommodate them all was a mystery to the boys.

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But gradually order came out of chaos; the big, heavily booted, blue-clad "bobbies" shooed and berated and shoved and ordered and helped and at last, with a toot of the whistle, the gang plank was drawn in, the mooring lines were cast off and loaded to the gunwales, the little steamer swung into the swirling muddy stream and poked her blunt bow up river to the deafening cheers, farewells, and parting shouts of the kaleidoscopic crowd upon the stelling.

"Well, we're off!" exclaimed Rawlins, "We may not know where we're going but we're on our way!"

"Yes, and to think we're way down in South America!" cried Tom. "I can't really believe it yet."

"It isn't much like the popular idea of South America, I admit," laughed the explorer who had joined them. "But you've only begun to see unexpected and surprising things."

"You'll have to tell us everything," declared Frank. "We want to learn all we can and everything's absolutely new to us, you know."

"I'll do my best," replied Mr. Thorne, "but even I learn something new every time I go into the bush."

"If we learn where that plane's hanging out, I'll be satisfied," declared the diver.

## CHAPTER VII

### OFF FOR THE JUNGLE

**N**EVER will the two boys forget that first trip up the big, turbid South American river. From start to finish it was one never ending succession of surprises, interests, wonders and delight. The miles of mangrove swamps, with their aërial roots drooping from the branches into the water, lured the boys' imaginations with their mysterious, dark depths. A great flock of scarlet ibis, that rose from their feeding ground upon a mud flat and, lighting on the trees, looked like gorgeous fiery blossoms, brought cries of delight from the boys. They watched the big greenheart rafts floating silently downstream with their Indian crews lolling in hammocks beneath the thatched shelters on the logs. Mr. Thorne pointed out dozing alligators which Tom and Frank had mistaken for logs; he showed them the giant, lily-like water plants which he said were "mucka mucka," and he called their attention to countless bright-plumaged birds which flitted in the

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foliage of the riverside trees. At times the steamer swung in so close to shore that the boys caught glimpses of frightened, scurrying iguanas or great lizards; at other times, it slowed down and stopped before some tiny thatched hut at the edge of a clearing and unloaded merchandise or people into the huge dugout canoes that put off from shore pulled by bronze-skinned, half-naked men.

"Are they Indians?" asked Tom, as they watched the fellows handling the heavy barrels and boxes with ease.

"No, Bovianders," replied Mr. Thorne, "a mixture of Dutch, negro and Indian blood. They're the best boatmen in the colony. I always have a Boviander captain for my boat."

"What does Boviander mean?" asked Frank. "Is it an Indian name?"

"It has a curious origin," the explorer informed him. "It's a corruption of 'above yonder.' In the old days, any one who lived up the river from the coast was said to live 'above yonder' and gradually the expression was transformed to 'Boviander.'"

"Well, that *is* funny!" declared Tom. "I never would have guessed it."

"You'll find a lot of queer expressions here,"

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laughed the explorer. "You'll hear the people speak of 'taking a walk' when they mean a trip in a canoe and you'll hear them say 'topside' when they mean some place which is indefinite. They also speak of the turns of a stream as 'streets' and they all use the native Indian names for birds, animals, and trees. They never say 'tapir' but 'maipuri,' a boa or anaconda is a 'camudi,' a camp is always a 'logi' or 'benab,' a canoe is a 'coorial' and so on."

"Gosh, I don't believe I'll ever understand them!" declared Tom, "but I'm going to try. Can't you get one of your Indians to talk? I'd love to hear that 'talky-talky' lingo you spoke about."

Mr. Thorne laughed. "All right," he assented and, approaching the edge of the upper deck where the first-class passengers were quartered, he leaned over and beckoned to one of the Indian boys who was dozing in a cotton hammock he had swung in the shade.

"Hey, Joseph!" he called. "Makeum for come here, this side."

The Akawoia grinned, stretched himself, and came padding on bare feet up the ladder.

"This fellow Buck name Joseph!" said Mr. Thorne, as the two boys looked at the pleasant-faced Indian



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whose head scarcely reached Tom's shoulder. "He one plenty good boy. Makeum for tellum white boy how can speakum talky-talky, Joseph."

Joseph half turned his head and, fixing his eyes on the deck, twiddled his toes in an embarrassed manner.

"No makeum for shame!" went on the explorer. "This fellows white boys makeum plenty long walk topside 'long we. Him wantum sabby plenty—wantum sabby Buck talk, wantum sabby bush, how can makeum for hunt, how catchum fish. Must for tellum, Joseph, must for makeum good fren'."

The Indian grinned and looked up. "Me tellum, Chief," he replied in a soft, low voice. "Me be plenty good fren' lon'side him. How you callum?"

"This fellow makeum call Tom," replied Mr. Thorne, introducing the boys, "Nex' fren' makeum call Frank."

Joseph shook hands gravely with the boys and smiled in a friendly way.

"S'pose you want makeum one walk. S'pose no sabby bush me tellum like so," he remarked, and then, evidently thinking there was nothing more to be said, he turned and walked silently away.

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“Why, that’s easy!” cried Frank as the Indian left. “I’ll bet I can talk that now. You no sabby Tom, me tellum you all same Joseph. How you likeum talky-talky like so?”

“Splendid!” cried Mr. Thorne, and all three roared with laughter at Frank’s first attempt at talking the Indian jargon.

The banks of the stream had now changed from the low mangrove swamps to bluffs and hills of sand; the dense tangle of weeds, mucka-mucka and vines had given place to lofty trees. There were heavy forests stretching away into the distance; tiny clearings and cultivated land showed here and there and the boys caught glimpses of numerous, open-sided, thatched huts among the trees. From time to time flocks of parrots flew swiftly overhead, screeching loudly as they winged their way across the river; herons, blue, gray and white, flapped up at the steamer’s approach. In backwaters covered with gigantic lily leaves the boys saw tiny brown and yellow birds running about, apparently treading on the water, and these Mr. Thorne told them were jacanas, whose long toes enabled them to walk upon the leaves of water plants without sinking.

Then the current of the river became swifter, the

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steamer chugged and struggled and panted and Mr. Thorne explained that the tide had turned.

"You don't mean to say that they have a tide clear up here!" exclaimed Tom in surprise.

"For nearly one hundred miles up the rivers," the explorer assured him. "Of course, the salt water doesn't come up here, but the tide backs up the rivers so there is a rise and fall of nearly six feet up to the first rapids or cataracts as they are called."

"Jimminy, are there rapids?" asked Frank.

"Rapids!" ejaculated Mr. Thorne. "Why, my boy, there are nothing but rapids. It's just one rapid and fall after another."

"Hurrah, that will be great!" declared Frank. "I've always wanted to run rapids."

"You'll run enough to last you for life," Mr. Thorne assured him. "And you'll have enough of them and to spare. It's all right running them when you're coming downstream, but it's slow, heartbreaking work going up. Why, it often takes days to haul up a rapid that we shoot in less than an hour coming down."

"I see where I'd like to have that blamed old plane," exclaimed Rawlins, who had arrived in time to hear the explorer's remarks. "If they see us

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coming, there won't be much chance of catching them. A plane's the thing for this country."

"Leave that to the Indians," chuckled Mr. Thorne. "When we locate the plane the rest will be easy—that is, if we can overcome the Bucks' superstitions enough to get them to touch the plane."

"By glory, that's a good idea!" declared the diver. "If they see Indians they won't be suspicious and they'll never know we're near until we march in and say 'hands up.'"

"They won't see the Indians," said Mr. Thorne decisively. "You don't know the Guiana red man, Mr. Rawlins. A shadow is a noisy and tangible thing compared with him."

"Oh, look, there's a ship!" cried Tom, pointing ahead to where the masts of a large vessel showed above the trees.

"Yes, she's off Wismar—loading greenheart, I expect," assented the explorer. "We're almost at the end of our steamer trip."

"But how did a big ship get up here?" inquired Frank.

"Ocean liners can come up here," replied Mr. Thorne. "The river is deep and it's not unusual to see several big tramps up here loading greenheart or

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even farther up at Akyma loading bauxite—aluminum ore, that is. An American company is developing a large mine there.”

“Oh, there’s the town!” cried Tom.

A few moments later, the steamer was being moored to a rickety wharf before the little settlement and the boys were surprised to see a diminutive locomotive and a train of toylike cars standing on a track near the landing.

“Why, they have a railway here!” exclaimed Frank. “Pshaw! this isn’t wild a bit.”

“It’s the jumping-off place of civilization,” said Mr. Thorne. “The railway merely runs across to Rockstone, a settlement on the Essequibo River.”

Rapidly the motley crowd of passengers disembarked, Mr. Thorne’s two Indians, reënforced by five others who appeared to spring by magic from nowhere, shouldered the party’s baggage, and Mr. Thorne led the way to a large dug-out canoe which was moored near the dock.

“We’ll spend the night across the river,” he explained, as the Indians piled their loads in the “coorial” and the boys and their companions seated themselves. “There is a hotel here,” he continued, “but it’s a rotten hole and my Boviander captain has



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a nice place where we can be far more comfortable."

Pushing off from shore, the Indians grasped their paddles and with swift, powerful strokes drove the craft diagonally across the river, swung it deftly into a small creek, and ran its bow on to a mud bank from which a notched log led up to the higher land.

Standing at the head of the improvised steps was a powerfully built, yellow man with grizzled curly hair, a heavy mustache and a pair of keen gray eyes.

"Howdy!" he greeted them with a pleasant smile, "I'se please to see you retarn, Chief."

Mr. Thorne shook his hand warmly. "Glad you were here, Colcord," he exclaimed. "These are the gentlemen and the boys that are going up river with me. Then, turning to the others, "This is Captain Colcord, my boat captain," he announced. "And there's none better in the colony."

The Boviander flushed under his dark skin and then, shaking hands with each member of the party in turn, led the way along a narrow path between the trees.

"You'll have to tell Colcord something of our plans," said Mr. Thorne, speaking to Mr. Pauling in subdued tones. "He's perfectly dependable and can

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keep a secret, but we can't accomplish much unless he knows what we want to do."

"Very well," assented the other. "I trust to your judgment, Thorne."

Colcord's house proved a revelation to the boys. It was merely a huge open shed, with a high, thatched roof, a floor of hewn boards raised several feet above the earth, and one small room partitioned off by watted palm leaves. Its furnishings consisted of a rough table of native wood, a few cheap chairs, a number of big hammocks, a nickel-plated alarm clock, and an American lantern. On the rafters overhead were spread woven palm leaf mats on which were placed Indian baskets and trays; a huge red earthen jug of water stood on a tripod of hard wood sticks; a long, highly polished bow and several six-foot arrows were laid upon a timber; and a single-barreled gun stood in a corner. It seemed scarcely more than a camp and might well have been the home of an Indian, but they soon found that this rude and primitive dwelling was very comfortable and that, despite its simplicity and its meager furnishings, no necessity was lacking.

Colcord's wife, who appeared to be of nearly pure Indian blood, was busy over a tiny fire in a small

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shed in the rear and no sooner had the Indian boatmen brought the baggage into the house than they joined her and seemed perfectly at home. Presently the Akawoia, Joseph, appeared, carrying a steaming earthenware pot, and Colcord rapidly produced dishes and cutlery and set the table. As he moved about and Joseph brought in more steaming dishes, the boys lolled in the hammocks in the deliciously cool breeze and idly watched the chickens, doves, and woefully thin dogs that swarmed about the house. They knew that less than a mile distant was a town, with railway trains, a sawmill, and shipping, and that only a few hours' travel by steamer was the big busy port of Georgetown, and yet, they could not help feeling that they were in the heart of the jungle and far beyond the reach of civilization.

"Gosh, isn't it great!" exclaimed Tom. "This is really camping out."

"You bet!" replied Frank. "I wonder if there are any wild animals about."

"Plenty deer," declared Colcord, who overheard Frank. "I made fo' to kill one this marnin'. I 'spect you folks plenty hungry, no?"

"Well, I have got a mighty good appetite," admitted Tom.

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"Me too," added Frank. "Gee, that food smells good!"

"O. K., then," declared the Boviander. "Jus' draw up an' he'p yourselves. I 'spect you're not accustomed' to rough livin' like this, an I have to 'pologize fo' not havin' more better."

"Now don't say a word!" Mr. Thorne admonished him, as the party drew chairs to the table. "I'll bet they never tasted anything better than this venison and yams and pepper pot, and it's like the Ritz compared to what we'll be getting from now on."

Every one declared that Mr. Thorne was right and that they had never tasted anything to equal the roast venison, the boiled yams, the fried plantains and the pepper pot.

The boys were particularly enthusiastic over the last and also over the crisp, toasted cassava bread and were greatly surprised to learn that both were made from the deadly poisonous bitter cassava root.

"The juice is the poisonous part," explained Mr. Thorne. "After it's squeezed out through a cylindrical sieve called a 'metapee'—that's one hanging over in the corner—any traces of the poison, which is prussic acid, are driven off by baking the meal into

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these cakes. The poisonous juice boiled down makes the pepper pot. It has the property of preserving meat and giving it this delicious flavor. It's really the national dish of Guiana."

"Well, it's good enough to be the national dish of any country," declared Rawlins. "Just fill my plate up again, Mr. Thorne."

The meal over, the party made themselves comfortable in the hammocks and, as pipes were lighted, the explorer told Colcord that they were going in search of an aircraft which had last been sighted flying to the south over Wismar.

"It's of the utmost importance that we find it," he said. "The men in it are desperate criminals and Mr. Pauling and Mr. Henderson are officials sent out by the United States Government to get them. They want those men dead or alive—alive preferably—and we expect you to help us. We have no idea where the machine is, but we have an idea they are hiding somewhere not far away. Now do you suppose we can trail that plane and get the men, Colcord?"

"Yes, Sir—Chief," replied the Boviander confidently. "But we'll never fin' it over this side, Chief. That airship's went up the Essequibo topside. I



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was makin' a walk up beyon' Malali for locus' gum an' I never cotch a glimmer of it, but ol' Charlie—the Macusi what lives over Mule Pen side, you know—he was huntin' pacu on the Tukumi Creek an' he mek to get mos' frightened to death when she fly over. Yes, Chief, I sure we make our walk up the Essequibo top side we boun' for to find she."

"Hmm, very likely," agreed the explorer. "Can we get a boat at Rockstone?"

"I can' say rightly, Chief," replied Colcord. "But I 'spect you can. Le's see, they's seven of you, an' we'll need a plenty good size boat an' 'bout ten men an' bowman asides me. You got Joseph, an' Billy an' Bagot an' Carlos an' Theophilus an' Abr'ham. That's six, an' I reckon I can s'cure t'ree more boys an' Boters for bowman, but I can' rightly say 'bout the nex' man."

"Ah can paddle," put in Sam who had been very silent. "Ah don' lay to do narthin'."

The Bovinander glanced approvingly at the Bahaman's powerful arms and shouldèrs. "Yes, son, I 'spect you can," he agreed. "You surely is a strong-lookin' boy."

Everything was soon arranged, one of the Indians was sent off to notify the men Colcord had in view,

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and, in preparation for an early start the next morning, all turned in almost as soon as it was dark.

The boys had never before slept in hammocks and, although Mr. Thorne and Colcord showed them how to wrap themselves in their blankets and lie diagonally across the hammocks, it was some time before they could make themselves comfortable and go to sleep. It was a new sensation to be thus going to bed practically in the open air and for a long time the boys remained awake, listening to the multitude of strange and unusual sounds which issued from every side. There were chirps, whistles, squeaks, and strident songs of insects; thousands of frogs croaked and barked and grunted; night birds called plaintively; owls hooted and from the forest in the distance came a roaring, reverberating bellow which Tom was sure must be a jaguar. But Mr. Thorne laughed and assured him it was merely a troop of howling monkeys or baboons and, to put the boys more at ease, he patiently identified each of the unusual noises that disturbed them. Gradually, realizing that there was nothing more dangerous than frogs or monkeys to be feared, and assured by the explorer that even the vampire bats would keep away as long as the lantern was kept burning, the two boys

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quieted down and, watching the myriad giant fire-flies, dropped off to sleep.

It seemed as if they had scarcely closed their eyes when Colcord's cheery cry of "Fireside" aroused them and they sat up, yawning sleepily, to find the sky across the river pink and gold with the coming dawn.

It was cold and chilly and the steaming coffee which Colcord had ready was very welcome.

"Golly, I thought the tropics were hot!" exclaimed Frank, as he beat his arms about and tried to keep his teeth from chattering.

Mr. Thorne chuckled. "Not at night—in the bush," he replied. "You'll find colder nights than this after we get farther up river."

"Whew! I'll want an overcoat then," declared Tom, "or a furnace fire!"

But the boys' chill was only temporary and a little exercise, combined with piping hot food, soon made them forget all about the cold morning air and by the time they were ready to embark in the canoe and cross the river the air was balmy and springlike.

The boys found little of interest on their ride across from Wismar to Rockstone by the railway, for the train passed through land which had been stripped

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of its forests by the lumbermen and the few remaining trees stood gaunt and dead above a tangle of weeds and shrubs. But at Rockstone they were delighted, for, close to the station, flowed the great Essequibo River, dark and mysterious, with its shores covered by the impenetrable tropic jungle. To them this mile-wide, silently flowing stream gave an impression of the unknown and savored of adventures to come, for Mr. Thorne had told them that its source was near the borders of Brazil and that much of its rapid and cataract-filled course led through country never seen or penetrated by white men.

The boat was ready and waiting, for the Indian sent by Colcord had made his way across to Rockstone and had arranged everything, and already the additional members of the crew and the bowman were stowing the outfit in the craft.

Within half an hour of their arrival the boys and their friends were seated under the arched canvas awning or "tent" near the stern, the nine Indian paddlers, with Sam, were in their places, and the bowman, grasping a huge paddle, was perched precariously on the boat's prow. Colcord stepped on to the stern and slipped an enormous paddle through a bight of rope. Then, to his shout of "Way-ee-oo!"

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the ten paddles dug into the water as one, the heavy, spoon-bottomed boat sprang forward, and Colcord straining at his great steering paddle, headed the speeding craft upstream. Five minutes later Rockstone with its houses, its railway station and its docks, slipped from sight behind a wooded point and only the sullen, mighty river and the endless jungle stretched ahead.



## CHAPTER VIII

### ON THE TRAIL

**R**OCKSTONE, the last outpost of civilization, had been left far behind and many miles of river had been covered when at last Colcord turned the boat's bow towards shore and ran the craft alongside a fallen tree that sloped from the high bank into the water.

Although the boys had seen much to interest them as they paddled upstream, yet they were cramped and tired, for, with the exception of a short stop for lunch at noon, they had been seated in the boat for nearly ten hours. Moreover, after the first few miles, the river and its banks were merely a constant repetition of what they had seen: walls of tangled jungle like a vast green velvet curtain rising from the river; vivid flowering trees; great azure blue butterflies; noisy carrion hawks; chattering parrots and ungainly yelping toucans along the shore—all reflected as in a mirror by the oily brown water.

They had expected to see Indians and to have the

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thrill of navigating rapids, but Mr. Thorne explained that these would not be reached until the following day and the boys were glad indeed to step on dry land and stretch their cramped legs when the boat at last was run ashore and preparations were made to camp.

Rapidly and with perfect system, the Indians commenced work, cutting poles and stakes and in an incredibly short time a big tarpaulin had been spread between the trees, hammocks were stretched and ready and the savory odors of coffee, bacon, and broiling meat were wafted from the campfire where Sam was presiding as cook.

Presently Joseph approached, naked save for a scarlet loin cloth, and looking the thoroughly primitive Indian with a long bow and arrows in his hand.

"Mebbe you likeum sabby how Buckman shootum fish," he remarked.

"You bet we would!" cried Frank, jumping up. And then, remembering that he must talk the Indian's jargon, he added, "Me likeum too much. Me come see."

The Indian grinned and, without a word, turned and slipped silently into the forest with the two boys at his heels. For a short distance he led the way

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among the trees and then, turning towards the river, came out upon a jutting rocky point. Raising his hand as a signal for caution, he stopped, fitted a six-foot arrow to his bow, and stepped silently towards the water's edge. Intently the two boys watched, utterly at a loss as to what Joseph intended to do. Then they saw him suddenly straighten up and quickly draw the huge bow. Like a streak of light the long arrow darted into the river. The next instant he threw aside his bow, rushed forward, and, seizing the floating arrow, dragged a big silvery fish upon the rocks.

"Gosh!" exclaimed Tom, as the two boys rushed forward to where the Indian was extracting a barbed iron arrow point from the fish. "I never saw anything like that! Why, he shot the fish with his arrow."

"Say, that *is* a new way of fishing!" cried Frank, as he examined the weapon. "This arrow's just like a harpoon with a head fastened to a line and not to the shaft. Gee, I wish Mr. Rawlins could have seen that."

Joseph grinned, picked up his bow and arrow, and a moment later had shot a second fish. Absolutely fascinated, the boys watched him as fish after fish

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was secured in this novel manner and then, as darkness was rapidly coming on, the three made their way back to camp.

Mr. Thorne chuckled as the boys enthusiastically related what they had seen. "I forgot to tell you about that," he said. "You should see them shoot fish in the rapids. That's really exciting. And they call them too."

"Oh, now you're fooling!" exclaimed Frank. "How can they call fish?"

"I don't know how they can, but I know they do," replied the explorer. "They stand near the water and wiggle their fingers and whistle and the fish come up. I've seen it scores of times and I'll wager you'll see it done too."

"Well, I suppose we'll have to believe it, if you say it's true," said Tom, "but it does sound like a fish story."

Sam's cooking proved highly successful, and as they were busily eating, Colcord suddenly jumped up and stood listening attentively. The next moment the boys heard a slight splash and a grating noise and one of the Indians uttered a low cry in his native tongue. Immediately from the river came an answering call and a moment later, a canoe appeared in the

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reflection of the firelight on the river. About it the Indians gathered.

"By glory, we've got visitors!" exclaimed Rawlins. "Wonder who they are."

"Indians," replied Mr. Thorne. "Know who they are, Colcord?"

"No, Chief," replied the Boviander. "I 'spect they's Wapisianas or Macusis from topside."

As he spoke two bronze-skinned figures approached the fire, clad only in their scarlet "laps" or loin cloths. Without uttering a word they passed around the fire, shaking hands with each member of the party, and then, squatting down, remained motionless and silent for a full minute. Evidently this was bush etiquette for Colcord and Mr. Thorne seemed to regard it as a matter of course. Then the explorer passed the new arrivals a tin of tobacco, Colcord filled a tin dish full of food and set it before them, and, as the Indians began to eat, the explorer spoke.

"You fellow makeum walk Rockstone?" he asked. "Come all time topside?"

"Makeum walk Bartica," responded one of the red men. "Come Pakarima like so."

"How you callum, Macusi mebbe?" inquired the explorer.



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"Arekuna," replied the other Indian.

"Eh, eh! Arekuna!" exclaimed Mr. Thorne. "You sabby white man makeum fly all same bird like so?" The explorer made a sound like the exhaust of an airplane's motor.

The Indians glanced sharply at the explorer and muttered some words in their own tongue.

"Me sabby," vouchsafed one of the two at last. "Me hearum. No sabby him white man. Me sabby him peai. No likeum plenty."

"Ah, we're getting on the trail!" exclaimed Mr. Thorne, turning towards Mr. Pauling. "They've seen or heard the plane, that's certain."

"But what do they mean by 'peai'?" asked Tom.

"Magic, witchcraft," replied Mr. Thorne. "Anything a Buck doesn't understand, or fears, or thinks supernatural, is peai."

Then, again addressing the Arekunas, he asked. "Where you seeum? You sabby what side him go?"

"No seeum," replied the Indian. "Makeum noise like so. Him plenty peai. Him go Mai-purisi side."

"Good!" cried the explorer. "Trust the Bucks to know where they went even if they didn't see the

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plane. I'll bet they're over in that lake on the Maipurisi. Just the place for them."

"Didn't I say they couldn't sneak around here without being seen?" cried Rawlins.

"Hmm, it doesn't look as if we'd have much trouble in tracing them at all events," remarked Mr. Pauling.

"How far is Maipurisi from here?"

The explorer turned to Colcord. "How far is it, Colcord?" he asked.

The Boviander considered a minute and then spoke rapidly to the Arekunas in their own native tongue. Then, when the Indians had answered, he replied, "Two days coming down, Chief."

"That means about six days going up," commented Mr. Thorne. "There are some pretty bad falls to haul over."

Suddenly Tom was seized with an idea and, whispering to Frank, rose and began rummaging in a chest.

"What are you boys up to?" asked Mr. Pauling.

"Going to set up our radio receivers," replied Tom. "Perhaps we may hear something. We ought to be listening whenever we can."

"Good idea," commented his father. "After this, we'd better keep one set ready in the boat all the time."

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As the two boys busied themselves connecting the instruments, the Indians and Colcord watched them closely, the red men seemingly fascinated by the mysterious-looking cabinets and their bright, nickel-plated binding posts and glowing bulbs. Little by little they edged nearer and nearer until a circle of naked bronze bodies and keen black eyes was formed about the boys and their instruments.

"I'll say they think that's 'peai,' " chuckled Rawlins. "I wonder what they'd do if a signal did come in."

"Be scared half to death," declared Mr. Thorne. "Those are fine instruments you have, boys."

"We made them all ourselves," replied Tom. "That is, all except the resonance coil. We got that from the sub."

As Tom spoke, he adjusted the receivers, while Frank moved the coil slowly about. To the Indians this evidently savored of some mysterious religious ceremony or incantation, and the boys could not help grinning as they saw the eager eyes of their Buck friends following every motion of the coil.

For some time Frank tried it towards the south, but no sound came to Tom's ears, and it was evident

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that if the plane were in that direction its occupants were not sending.

"Swing it around to the north," directed Tom "We'll see if we can pick up anything from Georgetown or any ship."

Turning, Frank moved the resonance coil around, and the next instant the sharp "dee-dah" of a dot and dash signal buzzed clearly from the receiver. With one accord the Indians tumbled head over heels as they strove to get away from the spot and, with frightened exclamations and terrified faces, picked themselves up and cowered near the fire.

"Peai!" they exclaimed. "Plenty peai! Me tell-um no likeum him fellow!" Every one burst out laughing and the Indian paddlers rather shamefacedly attempted to grin at their own fright. But the two Arekunas would have none of it and jabbered together earnestly in their own tongue.

"By glory!" exclaimed the diver. "If they're that scared at the code signals, wouldn't they get a jolt if they heard a voice coming in!"

"Thank Heaven they didn't!" said Mr. Thorne. "If they had, I'm afraid they would all have deserted."

Meanwhile the sharp "dees" and "dahs" were

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coming in on the instruments, and Tom, from force of habit, was mentally forming them into letters and words.

"It's some cipher message," he announced presently. "No sense to it at all."

"Take it down," exclaimed his father, suddenly interested. "It may be for those rascals with the plane."

Once more the message was coming in and Tom rapidly jotted down the words and handed the paper to his father. "They're sending the same thing over and over again," he said. "That's the third time it's been repeated."

Mr. Pauling eagerly scanned the message and slowly a smile and an expression of satisfaction spread across his features.

"It's for us!" he ejaculated. "Good news. The *Devon's* taken! Jove! It seems little short of uncanny to be getting word from Maidley way up here in the jungle."

"I'll say 'tis!" cried Rawlins. "Bully for the Colonel! Where did they get her?"

"Hurrah!" cried the boys. "Now these fellows up the river *are* in a fix!"

"He doesn't say where," replied Mr. Pauling.



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"Didn't want to use any name, I suppose—no cipher word for that—just says: 'Ship taken. All on board held.' He's no fool, Maidley. He knew the plane would hear this and took no chances of saying anything to make them suspicious. I expect he thought we might be listening and broadcasted the message in hopes we'd get it."

"Good old scout," declared the explorer. "Just like him to do that."

"Can you send a message back acknowledging this?" asked Mr. Pauling, turning to Tom.

"No," replied Tom. "We didn't bring our sending set. We thought if we received it would be all we needed."

"Hmm, too bad," commented his father. "Sorry Maidley won't know we got it and will keep on sending. Those fellows may get suspicious if they hear the same message coming in night after night."

"He'll know we got it before to-morrow night," declared Mr. Thorne. "I'll send word to him."

"How?" asked Mr. Pauling. "What magic do you use?"

"Easily enough," replied the explorer. "These Arekunas are going to Bartica. They'll be there before noon to-morrow and there's a telegraph line

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from there to Georgetown. Write a message to Maidley and they'll take it to Bartica and give it to the telegraph office there. It will be in Maidley's hands by noon."

"By Jove!" exclaimed Mr. Pauling. "I didn't realize we were so closely in touch with civilization."

The message was soon written and Mr. Thorne handed it to one of the still frightened Arekunas. "Must for takeum Bartica like so," he instructed the Indian. "No looseum. When makeum Bartica side giveum Mr. Fowler. You sabby him fellow?"

The Arekuna slipped the folded paper into a jaguar skin pouch hanging from his neck, "Me sabby," he said. "Takeum Mr. Fowler same way."

"Can you depend on those fellows?" asked Mr. Henderson.

"Absolutely," Mr. Thorne assured him. "I've never known an Indian to lose or forget a message and they're strictly honest and trustworthy. I've known an Indian to travel over three hundred miles through the bush to return ten shillings he'd borrowed."

"Not much like our redskins in the States," commented Mr. Henderson.

"I don't know about that," declared the explorer.

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"I've always found primitive men honest—it's civilization that ruins them. These Bucks are little more than vagabonds and scalawags once they become civilized and live near the settlements."

Presently the Arekunas silently withdrew, the Indian boatmen sought their hammocks, and the white men and boys followed their example. Although the boys had become somewhat accustomed to the noises of a bush night while at Colcord's house, yet here in their forest camp beside the mighty river, they felt strange and nervous. The boom and croak of frogs and the incessant sounds of myriads of insects were the same as they had already heard, but far louder and more numerous than at Colcord's, and in addition there were a thousand and one other noises for which the boys could not account and which kept their sleepy tired eyes wide open. But the Indians were sleeping soundly; from Rawlins' hammock, came lusty snores and the boys, despite their nervousness, finally lost consciousness and did not awaken until aroused by the sounds of the Indians starting the fire at dawn.

The Arekunas had already slipped away downstream, and, by the time breakfast was ready, camp had been broken, everything was neatly packed in

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the boat, and the Indian paddlers were waiting in their places.

For hour after hour they paddled upstream. Rocky islands appeared in the river—some bare and carved and worn by the water into odd grotesque forms,—others covered with trees. The current flowed more swiftly and just before noon a dull roaring sound reached the boys' ears, and, peering ahead, they saw a line of flashing white stretching across the river from shore to shore.

"First rapids," Mr. Thorne informed them. "We'll have lunch before hauling through, Colcord."

"Gosh, I call those falls and not rapids!" declared Tom as the boat was run ashore on the sandy beach of a tiny island. "I don't see how you expect to get this big boat through that."

"Wait and see," chuckled the explorer.

As Colcord leaped ashore he stopped, bent down, and examined the sand.

"Water Haas!" he exclaimed, pointing to a number of small indentations in the beach.

"What are 'water haas'?" asked Tom. "Some kind of animals?"

"Capybara—sort of giant Guinea pigs," replied Mr. Thorne. "They're likely to be in the brush here."

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Get your guns and you may be able to shoot one. They're good meat."

Eager for the chance to secure game, the boys and Rawlins got out the rifles they had brought and started up the beach, following the little trail left by the water haas. Presently they noticed that, instead of one, there were half a dozen tracks and at Rawlins' suggestion they separated and cautiously approached a tangle of palms and small trees near the upper end of the island.

Gaining the edge of the thicket, Frank, who was nearest the river, peered through the screen of foliage. As he carefully parted the leaves and branches, there was a startled snort and three big, clumsy-looking brown creatures leaped from the damp ground and stood for an instant staring towards the boy and sniffing the air suspiciously. So surprised was Frank at the sudden appearance of the beasts that, for a moment, he forgot to shoot, and the next second the three animals were scurrying out of sight. Hastily throwing up his rifle, Frank blazed away at the retreating forms.

"What was it? What did you shoot?" yelled Tom, as he and Rawlins came running at the report of Frank's rifle.



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"Don't know if I shot anything or what they were," replied Frank. "I was so surprised I didn't fire till they were running away. They went over there."

Hurrying to the other side of the thicket, Rawlins, who was in advance, gave a shout. "I'll say you shot him!" he cried. "Guess it's one of those water haas."

The two boys hurried forward and found the diver bending over the dead animal, a curious-looking creature with short stiff hair, an enormous head and broad blunt snout.

"Why, he's got webbed feet!" exclaimed Frank who was examining his prize.

"And he does look like a huge Guinea pig," declared Tom.

Elated at their success, the boys picked up the animal and hurried back to the boat.

"Yes, it's a water haas or capybara," declared Mr. Thorne. "Now we'll have a fine feast to-night."

"But he's got webbed feet," said Frank. "Can they swim?"

"Can they!" exclaimed the explorer. "Like a fish. That's why they're called water haas—it's Dutch for water horse. They're as amphibious as seals almost."

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"Say, let's take a swim!" suggested Tom. "I'm hot and the water looks fine."

"Don't you try it!" cried the explorer. "The place is full of perai and you'd surely be eaten alive."

"Why, what do you mean?" demanded Tom, puzzled. "I thought perai was magic or witchcraft. How can that eat us?"

Mr. Thorne burst out laughing and Colcord, who stood near, shook with merriment.

"Peai is witchcraft," explained the explorer. "Peraï is a kind of fish—'cannibal fish,' they're called sometimes. They're the most deadly and savage creatures in the bush. They'll tear anything that's flesh to bits in a moment. It's lucky I stopped you in time."

"Is that really true?" asked Mr. Pauling. "I've read travelers' tales of them, but I always supposed they were real 'fish stories.'"

"Not at all," Mr. Thorne assured him. "Let me demonstrate it."

Picking up a bit of meat, the explorer stepped close to the water and tossed it into the river. Instantly there was a splash, a flash of silver, and the meat was dragged under. The next moment the water fairly boiled with leaping, darting fish, and the on-

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lookers gazed with amazement as the voracious, savage creatures tore and snapped and bit.

"Gee, I'm glad I'm not in there!" exclaimed Frank. "They're like hungry wolves."

"Worse," declared Mr. Thorne. "They seem to go blind mad at the smell of flesh, and their jaws are so powerful and their teeth so sharp they can bite a piece out of a plank. A man would be torn to bits—eaten alive—if he went in there."

"Jiminy, I'd hate to tumble overboard!" exclaimed Tom.

"That's the odd thing about them," remarked Mr. Thorne as they started back towards the boat. "They won't touch a man if he has clothes on—apparently do not recognize flesh if covered by garments. In some parts of the rivers they are harmless—never touch people—and the natives bathe freely."

"Well, I'm not taking any chances," declared Tom. "I'll go without a bath for a while."

Embarking once more, the boat was paddled upstream and at the foot of the roaring, rushing falls, which the boys now saw were really a series of steep rapids, dashing and foaming over the jagged black rocks, the craft was run alongside a smooth ledge.

"All out!" cried Mr. Thorne, leaping ashore.

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Filled with interest to discover how the Indians would get the heavy boat through that tumbling seething mass of water to the river level, twenty feet above, the boys scrambled up over the rocks and watched every move of Colcord and his men.

"This isn't a bad spot," commented the explorer. "They'll get through without discharging. But, in many places, everything has to be taken from the boat and portaged for a mile or more around the rapids. Sometimes a score of such portages must be made in order to travel a dozen miles upstream, so you can understand how tedious and slow traveling in the interior is."

"This looks bad enough to suit me," declared Tom. "I should think the boats would get smashed all to bits."

"They're built for the purpose," replied Mr. Thorne. "Tough native wood and with spoon-shaped bottoms, so they slide off a rock in any direction." Some of the Indians had now uncoiled a long light rope and were moving upstream, jumping and scrambling from rock to rock, at times plunging into the swirling water up to their armpits or even swimming through the racing current, until at last they gained a precarious foothold upon a project-

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ing ledge in midstream, well above the falls. In the meantime, others had attached a second line to the stern of the boat and stood waiting for orders close to the water's edge, while the bowman and Colcord braced themselves in bow and stern, grasping their immense paddles.

For a moment the Boviander glanced about, studying the lashing white foam and the jagged, black rocks, casting his eyes over the waiting Indians to see that all were ready. Then, with a sharp "Hi-yi!", he dug his great paddle into the water. Instantly the bowman shoved the craft from shore into the current; the men on the bow rope hauled and tugged with all their strength; the captain shouted orders and threw his weight on his six foot paddle; the bowman paddled furiously; the men at the stern line bent to their task; and slowly the boat forged ahead. With consummate skill the Boviander and the bowman swung the craft to right and left, clearing the rocks by inches; the stern line kept it headed into the torrent; and foot by foot the boat crept up the falls. How the captain and bowman ever kept their balance as the boat rocked and pitched and seemed about to stand on end was a mystery to the boys, but with bodies swaying to the jerking, tossing craft



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they strained at their paddles—sweating, grunting, shouting, while about the bow the angry waters foamed and seethed and the hungry waves leaped above the gunwhales. For a moment the craft stood motionless, shaking and trembling to the terrific strain, and then human muscles and human brains won. The craft shot forward, the Indians yelled and rapidly gathered in slack, and the next instant the boat was safe from the torrent in a calm back-water above the falls.

“Gosh, that was great!” cried Tom, as, leaping from rock to rock, the boys made their way towards the boat.

“I’ll say ’twas!” exclaimed Rawlins. “But, by golly, if a rope had parted we’d have been in a nice fix.”

By the time the passengers were seated the lines had been coiled away, the Indians were once more in their places, and a moment later the boat was speeding upstream over a stretch of tranquil water.

But now the character of the river had changed. Sand bars and wooded islands broke its surface; the trees along the banks towered upward for over one hundred feet; the stream twisted and turned and flowed swiftly in dark, wine-colored currents between

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the islands; and even the birds and foliage seemed different. Little fresh water flying fish skittered away from the boat, great flocks of twittering swallows flitted about, clouds of brilliant yellow butterflies floated back and forth across the stream, and once or twice the boys caught glimpses of otters swimming in the river ahead.

In places, too, gaudy flowers that had fallen from the great trees covered the surface of the river with a solid mass of color, and the boat seemed to be passing over some gorgeous carpet, while the reflections of foliage and trees were so perfect that the boys had the strange sensation of being suspended in mid-air between two forests.

Very soon, however, the tranquil water came to an end and another series of rapids barred the way. Once more the men labored and tugged and dragged the boat up the falls, and time after time, as the falls were reached, the process was repeated. Then Mr. Thorne announced that they were approaching a really dangerous spot and as the boat rounded a bend the occupants saw a plunging, rock-strewn cataract, half hidden in the mist rising from the roaring water at its base. Here all the baggage was taken out and carried over the rocks and with only the empty boat

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the Indians and the Bovianders prepared for a tug of war with the falls. Over and over again they strove to gain a foothold on the slippery rocks, and a dozen times they were swept struggling downstream. But they laughed and yelled and shouted and seemed to enjoy the excitement and at last won a stand, waist deep in the flood, and by almost superhuman efforts dragged their craft to the water above the cataract. But the most dangerous part was yet to come. A short distance above the falls was a huge whirlpool—a dark, sinister mass of water in a basin of steep walled rock; deep, threatening, with its current rotating silently, swiftly around and around while, at its center, at the very vortex, masses of foam, bubbles and driftwood had been drawn and were constantly being sucked suddenly out of sight or thrust bobbing above the surface.

“Ugh! Isn’t that a nasty looking spot!” cried Tom. “Say, have we got to cross that?”

Mr. Thorne nodded. “Yes, just sit tight and don’t jump and you’ll be all right,” he declared. “If a paddle doesn’t break we’ll get through safely. It’s the only way and the worst spot on the river.”

As he spoke the captain was testing each paddle, examining the blades and handles for possible cracks

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and at last, with the baggage stowed snugly, the Indians and Sam in their places, Colcord told them that all was ready.

With fast beating hearts the boys seated themselves, Mr. Thorne, Mr. Pauling, Mr. Henderson and Rawlins took their accustomed places and with a "Yip-yi!" from the Boviander the paddles dug into the water and the coorial shot out upon the swirling black surface of the pool.

With every ounce of their strength, with their muscles straining under their bronze skins, the men plied their paddles and Colcord and the bowman swung their weight upon their huge paddles at bow and stern. For an instant the boat hung motionless, the bow quivered and vibrated to the drag of the current and then the craft darted ahead. High above the gun-wales boiled the maelstrom as the centre of the whirlpool was reached, the boat seemed actually to stand on end, it slid up a hill of water and ere the boys realized it was accomplished the coorial had dashed beyond the danger point and was safe in a narrow, swiftly flowing channel above the pool. And at this instant, just as the boat had gained safety, there was a sharp report and one of the Indians tumbled head over heels as his paddle broke short at the blade!

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"Gee!" cried Frank. "It was lucky that didn't happen a minute sooner!"

"I'll say 'twas!" agreed Rawlins. "We'd have been goners if it had, sure."

"A miss is as good as a mile," laughed Mr. Thorne. "You have to trust a lot to luck in this work."

"Same as in diving," remarked Rawlins.

"Well, Colcord, I guess we can call this a day's work," said the explorer as the boat swung into the broader river and tranquil water. "Find a good spot and we'll make camp for the night."

The boat was soon run ashore, the tarpaulin was quickly stretched and the crew lolled about, glad of a chance to rest their weary muscles.

"I suppose we might as well listen and see if we hear anything," suggested Tom, as Sam busied himself with the cooking.

"Yes, take every chance you get," said his father. "We're getting nearer and nearer to the spot all the time."

But no sound came into the receivers and with Sam's call to dinner the instruments were laid aside.

But when dinner was over, the boys once more adjusted their receivers and prepared to listen to anything that might be passing through the air. Tom



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clamped the phones to his ears, Frank turned the resonance coil about and as it pointed towards the south, Tom fairly leaped from his seat.

"Jumping Jiminy!" he exclaimed. "They're talking!"

"What?" cried Mr. Pauling. "Are you sure? Get what they say!"

Tense with excitement, leaning forward with breaths coming fast, all were silent, listening with straining ears to the faint buzzing sounds from the instrument while Tom rapidly jotted down the message. "They've stopped!" he announced at last. "I guess—Gosh! What's that?"

As he had been speaking, Frank, thinking the signals over, had turned around and as he did so, sharp "dees and dahs" once more issued from the receiver. Instantly all were again silent, glancing at one another with wonder and amazement on their features, for the signals were coming in with the coil pointed to the east! A moment later the sounds ceased and Tom handed the slip of paper to his father.

"By glory!" ejaculated Rawlins. "Some one must have answered them!"

"Sounded like it," agreed Mr. Henderson. "But

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it couldn't be any one on the *Devon*. We know she's captured."

"And it did not come from the direction of Georgetown," said Mr. Thorne. "Whoever was sending that message is to the east—in Dutch Guiana I think."

"It's meaningless gibberish," declared Mr. Pauling who had been studying the sheet of paper. "Just numbers and nothing more."

"Cipher, of course," commented Mr. Henderson. "Well, that proves they were talking to some one who replied. Otherwise the two messages would not be in the same cipher."

"I can decode it—if I take time," declared Mr. Pauling. "But I suppose if I do, it will be of little use—probably in Russian."

"Well it's blamed good news anyway," cried the diver. "It proves the old rascal and the plane are still 'topside' as the Indians say."

"And also that we haven't rounded up all the gang yet," added Mr. Pauling.

"No doubt they landed some one from the *Devon*," suggested Mr. Thorne, "or already had confederates in Surinam."

"In a way I'm glad they have," declared Mr

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Pauling. "Otherwise they'd not have any one to talk with. Better listen a while longer, boys."

But no other signals came in and at last, yawning and tired, the two boys put away their instruments and with the others crawled into their hammocks and fell instantly to sleep.

## CHAPTER IX

### KENAIMA!

**F**OR the next three days the boat was worked steadily up the river; paddled swiftly through long stretches of tranquil water; hauled up falls; dragged through rapids and ever penetrated deeper and deeper into the heart of the vast wilderness.

From time to time they had met Indians, sometimes individuals paddling silently close to shore in tiny canoes of bark which Mr. Thorne said were known as "wood skins"; sometimes families in big dugouts accompanied by flea-bitten, woefully thin dogs, naked brown children and all their household belongings, and once they had paddled up a creek and had visited a large Indian village where the boys had found a thousand things to interest them.

But while every Indian was questioned, few could give any information in regard to the plane, although many had seen or heard it as it had flown southward more than a week before.

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Each day and every night too, the boys had listened at their radio sets, but no more messages from the plane had been heard and all had begun to think that the aircraft had departed and that the long journey would prove fruitless. The boys, however, had had the time of their lives. They had taken numerous trips into the bush with Joseph and the other Indians. They had shot deer, wild turkeys, peccaries and a tapir, while a splendid jaguar skin and two beautiful ocelot hides were safely stowed among their belongings as trophies of their prowess as hunters, and Rawlins treasured a huge snake skin from a twenty foot anaconda that he had secured.

Much of Mr. Pauling's time had been spent trying to decipher the messages the boys had received from the plane and the "reds'" confederate, for it was his boast that there never had been a secret code which he could not interpret.

"I guess I've had my trouble for nothing," he announced one afternoon. "I've got it, but as I expected, it's in some foreign tongue—Russian most likely. Yet it doesn't look exactly like Russian either. It's not German, but whatever it is, it's no value to us now. Of course, we can get it translated eventually, but I'd give a lot to know what it says."



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"May I see it?" asked the explorer. "Possibly I may be able to identify it, even if I can't read it."

"Certainly," replied Mr. Pauling, handing him the sheet he had covered with writing.

Mr. Thorne glanced at the paper. "Why, it's Dutch!" he exclaimed. "Here, Colcord, can you read this?"

The Boviander fished a pair of battered spectacles from his pocket, adjusted them low on his nose and looking, as Tom said, as grave as if he were about to preach a sermon, he peered at the writing.

"Yes, sir, Chief," he declared after a minute's study. "I 'spec' I can. I don' comprehen' Dutch too much, Chief; but I can tell yo' what it mean."

"All right, what is it?" replied Mr. Pauling.

"This firs' one say as how they need help," declared the Boviander, as he ran his blunt brown forefinger along the lines. "It say how they bus' up the aperatix an' can't fly an' don' have food."

"By Jove!" cried Mr. Pauling. "That's good! Machine disabled, eh? Good for you, Colcord, we'll get them yet. Go on, what's next?"

The Boviander grinned and peered about over his spectacles vastly pleased to find himself the center of interest and able to exhibit his superior knowledge.

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Then, again studying the writing, he continued:

"I can't 'lucidate all the words, Chief. But here 'bout it say something 'bout the ship bein' los' and some fellow makin' afraid for to talk."

"Jove! then they know the *Devon's* taken," ejaculated Mr. Henderson, "and whoever was talking has got cold feet and has quit. That's the reason we heard nothing more. Is there anything else, Colcord?"

"Plenty else," replied the captain, "but this specie of Dutch I don' rightly know, Chief."

"Well, by the great horn spoon, we've found out all we want to know!" exclaimed Rawlins. "They're here; they're helpless—at least as far as getting away is concerned—and they're short of grub. By glory! my hunch is working out O. K., I'll say."

Only two days' travel now lay between them and the Maipurisi district where the plane was supposed to be and as they gathered about the camp fire that night, plans were discussed and formed as to their actions and procedure when they neared the hiding place of the two fugitive criminals.

"I think the best plan is to run up Unuko Creek," said Mr. Thorne. "It's scarcely ten miles across from there to Maipurisi and we can send a couple

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of the Bucks over to scout and report. Then, when we locate the plane, we can go overland, surround them and call upon them to surrender while we are hidden in the bush. As they can't get off in the plane and have no boat or canoe, they'll be helpless."

"Yes, that sounds like a good scheme," agreed Mr. Pauling, "but can you be sure your Indians will manage to keep out of sight? Moreover, if by chance they were seen or captured, are you sure they would not give away our presence?"

The explorer smiled. "If you'd ever seen one of these Indians stalk game you would not ask the first question," he replied. "Do you notice that they always use small bore, muzzle-loading guns and double "B" shot and yet they kill tapir and jaguar? They could only do that by getting so close to their quarry that the light charge of shot acts like a solid ball. In other words, they creep within a dozen feet of the most wary creatures in the South American jungle and an Indian who can do that could sneak into those fellows' camp and be within arm's reach without being seen or heard. As for being captured, why there's no more chance than of capturing a ghost! And if by a miracle they were seen why should those rascals ever suspect the Bucks knew anything about

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them or us, or had any connection with officers whom they probably imagine are hundreds of miles distant? No, don't worry on that score."

At this moment a low, plaintive, long-drawn whistle was borne faintly from the forest across the stream and instantly the Indians leaped up and stood motionless, listening intently and peering apprehensively across the river.

Once more, from the black depths of the jungle, came the mysterious sound and hastily gathering up their half-finished meal, the Indians came crowding close to the group of white men.

"Eh, eh, Joseph! Why makeum for 'fraid like so?" queried Mr. Thorne. "What you sabby?"

Joseph turned fear-wide eyes and terrified features towards the explorer. "Kenaima!" he exclaimed in a whisper.

Mr. Thorne whistled. "So that's it!" he ejaculated. Then, turning to the Indians, "No makeum 'fraid, Joseph! Kenaima no makeum walk this side. No huntum you fellow Buckman same way!"

"Please tell us, what *does* he mean?" begged Tom, utterly at a loss to understand what had frightened the Indians or what the explorer was talking about. "What *is* a Kenaima?"

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"The blood avenger," replied Mr. Thorne in a low voice. "If an Indian is killed, tribal law demands that his slayer must be destroyed, and not only the assassin must pay the penalty but all his relatives as well. The man chosen to wreak vengeance is the 'Kenaima' or, as the Indians believe, a man in whom the spirit of vengeance takes up its abode until its mission is accomplished. Until the Kenaima kills his victim he cannot see or speak to any living being, but must live alone, ever trailing the one he seeks until he has wreaked vengeance. He may chose either one of two forms—the 'tiger Kenaima' or the snake or 'camudi Kenaima.' If the former, he must strike down his man with a short club, if the latter he must strangle him, but in either case he must not kill his victim outright at once. Instead he must disable him and then return three days later when the wounded man is put out of his misery by the Kenaima driving a wooden spear through his body. Then the avenger must lick the blood from the spear or—so they believe—the spirit of vengeance will not leave and the Kenaima will go mad, ranging the forests and killing all he meets."

"Uugh! it makes me shiver," cried Tom, edging closer to his father and the fire.



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"And I thought these Indians were peaceable!" exclaimed Frank as he glanced nervously about.

"So they are—usually," declared Mr. Thorne. "But they have their own laws and customs and the Kenaima is one of them. Nothing can stamp it out."

"By glory, I'd hate to kill one of them!" exclaimed Rawlins. "But what happens if the fellow gets away—reaches civilization for instance?"

"He never gets away," the explorer informed him gravely. "The Kenaima is tireless, relentless. If one is killed, another takes his place and there are two deaths to avenge. Why, I've known a Kenaima to trail his victim into Georgetown and strike him down on the street!"

"By Jove!" ejaculated Mr. Pauling. "And these Indians think there's one about, eh?"

"They think that whistle was one," replied Mr. Thorne. "I can't say, but I know the Bucks claim the Kenaima warns friends to keep away by uttering a whistling sound. He must not be seen and the Indians are deathly afraid when they hear it. No power on earth could induce one of these men to cross that river to-night or to enter the jungle over there to-morrow."

"Great Scott, I don't blame 'em!" declared the

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diver. "Say, I wonder who the poor devil is that he's after!"

"Gosh I won't be able to sleep to-night," said Tom. "It makes my blood run cold, just to think of it."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed his father. "Probably that whistle was merely a night bird of some sort. These Indians are superstitious and imagine all sorts of things. Besides, we have nothing to fear. None of us has injured an Indian."

But despite Mr. Pauling's assurances and the fact that after a time the Indians gradually drifted back to their own fire and crawled into their hammocks, the boys tossed and remained wakeful for hours, starting up at each unusual sound and listening with straining ears for the uncanny, mysterious whistle. But it was not repeated and at last, worn out and sleepy, the boys' drowsiness overcame their nervous fears and the gruesome blood avenger was forgotten in a dreamless slumber.

With the bright sunshine of the following day it seemed very silly to have been afraid of the supposed Kenaïma and the boys discussed it without the least shivery sensations running up and down their spines as had been the case the night before. But they noticed that as the boat left camp, the Indian paddlers

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kept close to shore and glanced furtively across the river and that even Colcord seemed to feel relieved when they reached a bend and the locality of the strange whistling sound was left astern.

But even then the Indians acted strangely. Heretofore, they had laughed and joked or had sung rollicking chanteys in unison to the strokes of their paddles, but to-day they were quiet, talking together in low tones, constantly edging the boat towards the center of the river, despite Colcord's efforts and commands, and plying their paddles more vigorously than ever before.

"I believe there's something afoot," declared Mr. Thorne. "I've lived a long time among these people and I'm convinced they have a sixth sense—mental telepathy or something—by which they know intuitively when there is danger near and I'm beginning to think that there may be a Kenaima about."

"Why don't you ask them?" inquired Mr. Henderson.

"Torture wouldn't force them to tell," responded the explorer. "Even to mention the avenger by name is considered dangerous—I'm surprised that Joseph dared utter the word last night."

"But if he's only after one person, why should

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they be afraid?" asked Frank. "They know he's not after them."

"Very true," replied Mr. Thorne. "But they fear that he may not have driven the spirit of vengeance from his body—if he's killed his man—and that being the case he is liable to kill and attack any one."

"Hmm, uncomfortable sort of chap to have at large in the bush," commented Mr. Pauling. "Does that ever occur?"

"Yes, frequently," said Mr. Thorne. "It may seem preposterous to us, but the Indians believe so thoroughly in their superstitions that if a Kenaima does not succeed in carrying out his entire purpose he goes crazy and does run amuck."

"Ah, I understand, sort of auto suggestion," remarked Mr. Pauling.

It was now time to think of stopping for the noon-day rest and lunch and at Mr. Thorne's orders, Colcord headed the boat towards shore.

Instantly, the Indians stopped paddling, jabbered excitedly together and then one of their number spoke vehemently to the Boviander in the Akawoia tongue.

"He say they not goin' make camp ashore, Chief," announced Colcord. "They boun' for to make stop at a islan'."

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Mr. Thorne raised his eyebrows, "Oh, very well," he replied. "It's just the same as far as I'm concerned."

"Not taking any chances, I see," laughed Mr. Henderson as the mollified Indians again took up their paddles and headed for a small barren island in mid-stream.

While Sam was cooking lunch, the two boys and Rawlins strolled about the island, hunting for turtle eggs in the sand and amusing themselves by chasing the big lizards that ran scuttling across the pebbles.

As they reached the upper end of the island, the river beyond a sharp turn came in view and the boys called the diver's attention to hundreds of great black birds, wheeling and circling above the trees half a mile distant.

Rawlins looked at them a moment. "They're buzzards," he announced. "Vultures—wonder what they've found up there."

"Gee, but there's a bunch of them!" exclaimed Tom.

Then, at Sam's shout, they hurried back to the boat and busied themselves with their meal.

As the boat once more moved upstream and passed



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the island, the great flock of buzzards still soared in the clear blue sky above the forest.

"What do you suppose they've found?" Frank inquired of the explorer. "They were there when we walked about the island. Isn't it funny they don't go down and eat if they've found a dead animal?"

"Possibly it's a wounded creature," replied Mr. Thorne. "They often follow a sick or injured animal until it dies. Or again there may be a king vulture there. The black rascals won't dare touch carrion until the king's gorged himself."

"King vulture!" exclaimed Tom. "What's he?"

"It's a large species of vulture—light colored—sort of creamy white with red and blue head, and nearly as big as a condor. They always go singly and if one of them alights near a carcass, the black vultures keep off until he's finished. That's why they're called king vultures."

"I'd like to see one," declared Frank. "Let's go over and see if he's there and what they've found."

"Very well," laughed Mr. Thorne, glad to humor the boys' curiosity. "Whatever it is, is near the river. Colcord, run over to that point and we'll have a look at what the buzzards are after."

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As the boat approached the spot, the boys saw that trees and rocks were black with the loathsome birds which rose on flapping wings as the craft touched the shore and the boys and the others sprang on to the rocks.

Whatever had attracted the scavengers was evidently just within the verge of forest and climbing the bank, Rawlins, who was in advance, saw a huge white and black bird flap up from a clump of grass a few yards away.

"There goes the old king!" he exclaimed.

Anxious to catch a glimpse of the great bird, the boys stopped and craned their necks and the diver stepped forward towards the clump of coarse grass.

The next instant a cry of mingled horror and surprise rang through the forest and Rawlins, pale and with a strange expression on his face, came hurrying back.

"Don't go in there!" he cried. "Come on back to the boat, boys!"

"But what—what is it?" cried Tom. "What *did* you see? You look as if you'd seen a ghost!"

"Worse!" exclaimed the diver. "It's a man! A man staked out—"

"A man!" yelled Frank and then, seized with sud-

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den terror, the two boys turned and fled headlong towards the boat.

"You mean there's a human body in there?" demanded Mr. Pauling who, attracted by Rawlins' excited tones, had hurried forward. "Come on, brace up, Rawlins! A dead man can't hurt you! We can't leave a human being to be eaten by vultures."

With a great effort, Rawlins recovered himself. "Guess it was the shock of seeing him," he declared, rather shamefacedly. "But by glory, it is a rotten sight!"

"Rotten or not we'll have to bury him," declared Mr. Pauling. "He's an Indian I suppose."

"Indian nothing!" cried Rawlins. "That's the worst of it! It's a white man!"

"By Jove!" ejaculated Mr. Pauling. "Who could it be?"

The next instant they had reached the thicket and at the sight which greeted them, even Mr. Pauling, Mr. Henderson and the explorer drew back filled with nauseating horror.

Stretched at full length upon the ground was the body of a man, with a long staff of wood driven between his shoulders and pinning him to the earth.

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And then, as they took a second glance, horror gave way to amazement, for fringing the dead man's face pressed against the forest floor was a huge red beard!

"Jumping Jupiter, it's he!" cried Rawlins. "Old Red Whiskers himself!"

"And killed by a Kenaima!" exclaimed Mr. Thorne.

"Jove, no wonder those Indians were nervous!" ejaculated Mr. Pauling.

"I'll say they had reason to be!" declared Rawlins. "But what in blazes started a Kenaima after this guy do you suppose?"

Mr. Thorne had stepped to the edge of the trees. "Come here, Colcord," he called, "and bring a couple of shovels along. Better bring Sam too. No use trying to get one of the Bucks."

But when the Boviander arrived, he took one glance at the body and then, throwing down the shovels raced back to the boat. Too much Indian blood flowed in his veins for him to approach a victim of the Kenaima and as he reached the boat a low, terrified wail arose from the throats of the Indians: "Kenaima! Kenaima! Kenaima!"

Leaping into the craft they seized their paddles.

"Come on!" shouted Mr. Thorne. "Run for your

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lives! They're crazed with fear! They're going off!"

Shouting to Colcord and the Indians, the explorer tore down the bank and across the rocks with the others at his heels. Already the boat was several yards from land, but as he heard Mr. Thorne's commands and realized what he was doing, Colcord checked the boat, uttered sharp orders to the Indians and with Sam's help swung the boat ashore. The four men and the boys leaped in and instantly the terrified Indians dug their paddles into the stream and drove the boat madly from the accursed spot.

"Too bad, but it can't be helped," muttered Mr. Thorne. "I hate to leave him, but there's nothing to be done."

"Well, he's tossed many a poor devil to the sharks!" exclaimed Rawlins. "So I guess it kind of evens up things. But by glory, I'd like to know where his mate is."



## CHAPTER X

### RED BEARD SEALS HIS DOOM

**F**AR up in the Guiana jungles and strangely incongruous and out of place in the heart of the bush, a seaplane rested half drawn upon the shore of a small lake. High above the mighty trees it had flown from Georgetown, following the course of the great river stretching like a silver ribbon through the endless jungle and like a giant bird it had circled and swooped to the surface of Maipurisi Lake. For a hundred miles and more its occupants had seen no break in the forest, no sign of civilization, no house or clearing save the scattered thatched benabs of Indians or the small, half-cleared patches of forest that marked the red mens' gardens. Hounded from one secret rendezvous to another, their submarine wrecked and many of her crew killed in a collision; with their own steamship blown up in St. John's harbor and with a destroyer hot on their trail, the master mind of the gang of international rogues and his trusted assistant had sought refuge

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in the heart of unknown Guiana. Confident that they had thrown their pursuers off their track; certain that their fellows had hoodwinked their enemies and had wrecked the destroyer in the Bocas, and congratulating themselves on their clever ruse of boldly entering Demerara and departing in an airship while posing as explorers, yet the two rascals were taking no chances.

They well knew that the men trailing them were no amateurs; that they were matching wits with the most resourceful members of the Secret Service and they also knew that their enemies, by almost uncanny intuition, had foreseen and had checkmated their every move for weeks past. There was a chance that in some way their well-laid plans had miscarried; that the destroyer had escaped destruction, and that finding—as they inevitably must—that the story of the *Devonshire* was a myth and that an aircraft had left the *Devon*, Mr. Pauling and the others would leave no stone unturned to capture the ship and her crew. The two arch fiends had no desire to be present when this took place.

Months before this they had kept British Guiana in view as a last resort in case of just such an emergency as had arisen, for Van Brunt had told of an

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ancient ruined city hidden in the heart of the unexplored district. A city of a prehistoric race upon the shores of a great lake and within the ruins of which were vast stores of golden ornaments and bullion. But he had never divulged the exact locality of this lost and supposedly fabulous golden city of Manoa—the El Dorado that sent Sir Walter Raleigh on his travels. Van Brunt was no fool and he knew his fellow rogues too well to trust them with his secret, but he had sworn that, should occasion arise, he would accompany them and guide them to the lost city.

But Van Brunt had met a sudden and violent death upon the tramp and his secret had died with him. Not until the two men in the plane had looked down from the clouds upon that vast, illimitable sea of green stretching away in billowing hills to the distant mountains, did they realize what a hopeless task it would be to locate the city by the lake. That mattered little, however. For the present, they planned merely to hide for a short time, to await word from confederates in Dutch Guiana that the coast was clear and then, by an easy flight, travel into the Dutch colony, gather their men together to resume their interrupted activities and wreak ven-

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geance on those who had relentlessly hunted them down. So, having left every trace of civilization far behind, and feeling confident that even the Americans would never dream of attempting to trail them into the heart of the bush, they selected Mai-purisi as a promising spot and swiftly dropped to the smooth surface of the lake.

But fate was against them. As their great plane dropped below the tree tops and, with the cessation of the motor's exhaust, skittered across the black surface of the forest lake, an unseen, undreamed of snag lay hidden among the lily pads and with a rending, sickening sound, the thin skin of their boat was ripped open for a dozen feet. The propeller had not ceased to revolve and realizing their one chance lay in making the shore, the pilot switched on the motor and slowly the crippled plane dragged across the few hundred feet of water until its bow grated on the sand.

With the after half of its hull submerged, injured beyond repair, but safe from sinking, the now useless aircraft rested like some huge wounded bird in the shelter of the overhanging trees.

Cursing and raging, the two men clambered out. Their plight was indeed serious and none realized it

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better than they. The machine in which they had expected to fly so easily to the Dutch colony was absolutely useless; they had no boat, canoe or other craft and to tramp through the bush to civilization would, they knew, be practically impossible, even had they known the way. They were as effectually stranded as though marooned on a desert island in mid-ocean and, worst of all, they were not over supplied with provisions. They had counted on staying but a few days in hiding and had carried supplies accordingly and now, for all they knew, they might be weeks in the jungle. They had no firearms save their automatic pistols and as neither was familiar with the bush or an experienced hunter, they felt sure that they would starve before they could secure enough game to keep them provided with food if they had to do their killing with their pistols.

Their only hope was in their radio. With this they could communicate with their friends and make known their plight, but even if their fellows in Surinam started out to rescue them they knew it would be many days—weeks perhaps—before their friends could traverse the country and paddle up the rivers to the spot where they were stranded. Moreover,



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they did not know their exact position. They had followed the courses of the Demerara and Essequibo rivers in a general way, but they had cut across forests between the streams and their map showed no lake to correspond with Maipurisi. And worst of all there was no one at fault, no one to blame but fate and so, to relieve their feelings, they cursed their pursuers, cursed their luck, cursed everything and everybody until they could curse no more.

But swearing did no good. The parrots screamed and the monkeys chattered mockingly from the tangled tree tops. A bold carrion hawk cocked his head on one side and screeched derisively and a big alligator, lifting his head cautiously above the surface of the lake, cast a baleful eye upon them and promptly submerged.

Then, realizing that whatever the future held they must live for the present, the two men ceased their futile ravings and busied themselves salvaging everything possible from the crippled plane. The radio set was unhurt, their pistols and ammunition were safe; they found matches in watertight containers and there was a small ax. But much of their food was ruined. It had been stowed in the hull and

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while the canned goods were of course uninjured, the flour, sugar, salt and dry provisions were water soaked and ruined.

Between them and starvation were provisions for less than three days, aside from what game they might be lucky enough to obtain, and as they once more commenced to curse in half a dozen languages, the rain came down in torrents. Their only shelter was the plane and splashing through the water they clambered aboard and shivering and drenched cowered in the protection of the broad wings. Chilled to the bone, utterly miserable they sat there, until at last, unable to endure it any longer, the huge red-bearded giant jerked out an oath and leaping ashore, gathered wood and pouring gasoline over it succeeded in starting a fire.

Encouraged by the warmth, both fell to work and ruthlessly cutting struts and stays, dragged the wings of their machine ashore and by dint of hard work managed to brace and guy them into position to form a water-tight shed. A portion of another wing served to keep their bodies from the sodden ground and had they been well supplied with food their predicament would not have been so bad.

Misfortunes seldom come singly, however, and

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when, in somewhat more cheerful mood, they attempted to get into communication with their friends by radio, they discovered that the apparatus would not work. Fortunately for them, the red-bearded man was an expert mechanic and electrician and he diligently set to work. The motor was still in good condition and after he had overhauled the instruments and had set them up on shore the motor was started and the batteries recharged.

All this took time, however, and in the meantime the slender stock of provisions was dwindling at an alarming rate. They tried adding to their larder by hunting, but with no success. The birds kept high in the trees, the pheasants and wild turkeys they flushed gave them no chance of a standing shot and the only animals they saw were agoutis that flashed out of sight like streaks of brown light and a few monkeys romping among the branches far above their heads. They had no knowledge of trapping, they possessed no fishing tackle and when, in desperation, they succeeded in shooting an alligator, the creature promptly sank and was lost. Knowing nothing of the bush and fearing to poison themselves, they refrained from eating the berries, fruits, and nuts which they found. Had they but known it, they

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could have sustained life for weeks on the Souari nuts and palm berries that were abundant all about their improvised camp.

Even the narrow trails and paths through the forest were meaningless to them and their untrained eyes could not distinguish between the game trails and an Indian pathway which led to a large Akuria village less than five miles distant. And when at last their radio was in working order and they sent out their first message calling for help and the answer came back, their worst fears were realized. The *Dévon* had been taken, those on board were prisoners and their friends in Surinam not only stated that they were suspected and dared not attempt an expedition, but added that the Americans had left for the bush, that they were even now in the interior and that to attempt to communicate by radio would be merely to divulge their whereabouts to Mr. Pauling and his party.

Resourceful, bold and self-confident as the two were, yet now they could see nothing but death or capture in store for them. Indeed, if some miracle did not intervene, death would most certainly be their portion, for they well knew that to be taken prisoners meant an end on the gallows or in the



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electric chair for them and both vowed to take their own lives before submitting to their pursuers.

But as long as they were alive there still remained a chance that they might escape. The Americans might fail to locate them—although knowing that the boys possessed the latest devices in the way of radio instruments they were confident the messages which had passed between themselves and their confederates had been heard—and in the past they had always managed to slip out of the tightest places by some means.

Their one hope was in a boat, in a craft of some sort in which to navigate the lake and the rivers. They swore and racked their brains striving to devise some means of constructing a raft or a makeshift which would float. With their single, short-handled ax it was an impossible task to cut trees large enough to support their weight—and even had it been possible this would require so much time that the last of the food would be gone ere they could embark. Then they attempted to make use of the plane's wings and although these floated, the men's weight sank them so low that the hollow surfaces were ankle deep with water. Moreover, they were too clumsy and unwieldy to navigate.



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In every effort, every plan, they were balked and then, when their case seemed utterly hopeless, fate suddenly seemed to favor them. In a despairing attempt to secure something to eat, the two had pushed through the forest until, a mile or more from their stranded aircraft, they had come out at a small, dark creek and there, drawn upon the bank, was a canoe. Beside it a naked Indian was squatting, cleaning a string of fish and the next instant the two desperate men had leaped from cover and had seized the dug-out. The Indian, startled at this sudden and unexpected appearance of the unkempt, wild-looking men, had uttered a frightened cry, and dropping his fish, had sprung away. But as he saw the strangers taking possession of his craft and realized they were human beings and not spirits or "bush devils" he rushed to the canoe, jabbering excitedly in his native tongue and strove to prevent the rascals from shoving his boat into the stream.

But he might as well have essayed to stem the flow of the river or to argue or plead with the forest trees. The "reds" were desperate; a human life more or less meant nothing to them and the red-bearded giant whipped out his pistol and fired. With a gurgling moan the Akuria staggered back, swayed drunkenly

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and dropped limply upon the muddy shore. The murderer, seizing a paddle swung the canoe into the creek and headed it towards the lake.

But their crime had been witnessed. Unseen among the trees, a mere brown shadow in the jungle, the dead Indian's companion had peered from his hiding place and had seen all. And although the two in the canoe never dreamed of it, they were nearer to death at that instant than ever before in their lives of crime.

Slipping a tiny arrow into his long blowpipe, the watching Indian rested the deadly weapon across a low-growing branch and with a puff of his breath the fatal dart flashed silently through the air straight at the red-bearded fellow's chest. But at the same instant the man leaned backward to avoid an overhanging limb and the tiny messenger of death sped by and dropped harmlessly into the water unseen and unsuspected by the intended victim. Before another dart could be fired, the canoe had slipped behind a bend and the Indian, baffled, stepped from his hiding place and hurried to the side of his dead tribesman. A single glance sufficed to show that he was beyond human help and only stopping to cover the body with broad palm leaves, the Akuria sprang

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into the jungle and silently as a shadow raced along a dim and indistinct trail toward the distant Akuria village.

As he came into the clearing and uttered the moaning wail that told of death, the Akurias swarmed about like a hive of angry bees. Instantly two men were despatched in a canoe to bring in the body of the murdered Indian and with scowling brows, flashing eyes and vehement gestures, the villagers gathered about their wrinkled old chief, demanding vengeance. Gravely the old man spoke, promising that tribal law and tribal customs would be followed to the letter and as the women and boys drifted back to their huts, the chief and the older men entered the great, conical-roofed house in the center of the village and seated themselves in a circle with the younger men standing about.

Presently, from his sacred hut, the "peaiman" or medicine man approached, his face concealed by a baltata mask, a gorgeous feather crown upon his head, strings of tinkling seeds about his neck, his body hideously painted and bearing a calabash rattle in one hand and a carved and decorated staff in the other.

Prancing and dancing, chanting a low, monotonous

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dirge, the peaiman moved through the silent throng of Indians to the side of the fire in the center of the immense house. Squatting beside the flames, the medicine man made mystic figures in the air with his wand, muttering in a low voice meanwhile, and punctuating his words with angry shaking of his calabash rattle. At last he straightened up, fumbled in the monkey-skin pouch at his side and drew forth a bundle of feathers tightly wrapped with bark fiber so that only the ends of the quills were visible. Holding the bundle forth, the medicine man spoke and gravely and silently the men approached, each in turn drawing a feather from the bundle.

As the plumes were drawn from their covering and showed green, red, yellow or blue, sighs or low moans came from the lips of those who drew them, until at last, the Indian who had witnessed the murder of his fellow approached and drawing a feather, uttered a cry of triumph as he held it up for all to see. The plume he had drawn was black as night!

The next second he had slipped away and the gathering Indians, preceded by the medicine man, filed from the house and squatted on the bare ground without; all eyes fixed upon a small hut near the edge of the forest. Presently from this, a weird figure

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emerged. Upon its head was a halolike crown of macaw feathers, and about its shoulders and waist were mantles of ink black plumes of the Curassow or "powi." From head to foot the copper brown skin was hidden under a coat of scarlet paint striped and spotted with black and white, with two staring eyes and a grinning, fang-filled mouth painted upon the chest. In one hand he held a long bow and arrows, in the other a short, carved, paddle-shaped club of dark, heavy wood.

Stepping to the edge of the jungle, the man turned and faced the silent waiting tribesmen. For a moment he stood there, motionless as a statue, and then, with a swift movement, he tore off his feather head-dress, cast it on the ground, tossed his bow and arrows beside it, whirled his club about his head and with a ringing, blood-curdling scream, leaped into the forest and disappeared.

The tiger Kenaima was on the murderer's trail!



## CHAPTER XI

### VENGEANCE

**W**ITH hopes revived the red-bearded man and his companion paddled their stolen canoe up the creek and after some trouble reached the lake where their dismantled plane was drawn upon the shore.

Now that they had a craft all their cocksureness had returned to them, for they knew that in the maze of waterways they could escape from their pursuers. Now that luck had again turned in their favor they had no fears but what they would ultimately reach some port where they would be safe. Moreover, the matter of food did not trouble them. They knew that there were Indians scattered through the forest. Van Brunt had told them that all the Guiana tribes were mild, peaceable people and they felt confident that they could wrest supplies from the red men even if they had to shoot them down to accomplish their ends.

But they were not such fools as to start out without

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some supplies and necessities. There were still a few provisions remaining in their shelter, as well as matches and other necessities, and beaching their canoe, they hastily gathered what belongings they desired and pushing off deserted their hapless airship with a curse and paddled towards the nearest river. Before they had started, however, they had studied their maps and had laid their plans. Although the Maipurisi Lake was not shown, they knew in a general way where they were and they judged that Mr. Pauling and his companions would follow the shortest and most direct route, for they did not delude themselves with the idea that the Americans were ignorant of their hiding place. In fact, they felt confident that their radio conversation had been overheard and while it had been in cipher and in Dutch at that, they had too much respect for their enemies' intelligence and experience to assume that the Secret Service men had been unable to translate their messages.

The leader, like all successful crooks, always acted on the theory that those who sought him knew far more than he planned to have them and he invariably made his plans accordingly. So now he reasoned that they would have information that the

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plane had passed over Wismar headed southward, that they would follow up the Demerara River and that having heard his radio signals and thus having located him, they would cut across by one of the streams that led towards Maipurisi. Accordingly, he decided that the only safe route was to make their way to the Essequibo, descend that river and then, before they reached the outskirts of civilization, follow some tributary that led westward to the Venezuelan boundary. Once in that republic they would be far more secure than even in Dutch Guiana, and, moreover, in order to reach the Dutch colony they would be obliged to cross districts where Mr. Pauling's party had already passed and where, no doubt, watch would be kept for them.

But for once the crafty master mind of the cut-throat gang had reasoned erroneously. He had not taken the Indians into consideration; he did not dream that these primitive savages were the most observant of people; that an airplane, even flying thousands of feet above their villages, would be heard and seen and would cause such wonder and fear that the news of its passage would be spread far and wide. It never entered his mind that the Americans were accompanied by Indians and were

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guided by a man who had spent years in the bush and was thoroughly familiar with Indian ways and Indian character. And so, as, mightily pleased at the good fortune which had fallen them, the two men headed their canoe westward towards the Essequibo, they were running straight into the clutches of their enemies.

Had they but known of the sharp eyes that watched their every movement and of the sinister being who, armed with the sacred Kenaima club, was threading the jungle in their direction, they gladly would have sought the Americans, for the punishment which awaited them in the Courts of Justice was nothing compared to the awful vengeance that lurked in that hideously painted savage on their trail.

In their aircraft, speeding through the sky at eighty miles an hour, the distance from the great river to the lake had seemed nothing. From far aloft, the country had been spread like a map beneath them and from the height of a few thousand feet the lake had appeared close to the big river with only a few miles of winding, forest-fringed creeks connecting the two. But they soon realized that what seemed a short run by aircraft was interminably long when paddling along the twisting waterways in a canoe.

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They had expected to come out upon the bosom of the Essequibo by nightfall at the latest, but sundown found them still upon the dark and dismal creek surrounded by jungle. As they knew that they could not go on in the darkness, they were compelled to stop and camp for the night.

Fortunately the red-bearded fellow had had the foresight to strip some of the waterproof linen covering from the plane's wings and this they erected for a tent. They built a rousing fire and tired out with their unaccustomed labor of paddling, stretched themselves on another strip of linen and prepared to sleep. They were no longer worried, all their self-confidence had returned and they joked and laughed to think how the Americans would have all their long trip for nothing and would find only the useless, deserted aircraft at the end of their journey. Their one regret was that they could not be present to gloat over the discomfiture of their enemies and to see their puzzled looks and hear their comments when they found the fugitives flown and were utterly at a loss to fathom the means of their escape.

But despite their feeling of security, they were uneasy. They had nothing to fear for they knew there were no hostile Indians in the country; they



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had the utmost contempt for any wild animals and they were armed and could protect themselves even if they were attacked. Yet as the hours passed and the myriad strange noises and calls and cries of the wild things shrilled and grunted and croaked through the jungle, the slender highly strung leader tossed uneasily on his hard couch and found himself staring, wide-eyed and sleepless into the blackness of the night. His companion—brutal, phlegmatic and absolutely without nerves, was snoring lustily, and ashamed of his ridiculous fears, the other tried to follow his example.

Then, just as he was dozing off, a low unearthly cry reverberated through the forest, a blood-curdling moan, rising and falling in weird cadence like the wail of a Banshee. At the sound, the noises of frogs, insects and night birds ceased as with one accord and an awful deathly silence followed. With a sharp cry of terror the man sprang up, a cold sweat breaking out on his skin, shivers running up and down his spine and yet his companion slumbered on.

Never in his life had this unprincipled, heartless villain known the meaning of fear, but like all of his sort he was an arrant coward at heart and, though he would be the last to admit it, thoroughly super-

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stitious, and that awful cry, ringing through the midnight forest, was enough to bring terror to the bravest man.

In a vague way he knew that jaguars dwelt in the forest, but Van Brunt had often talked of the bush and had laughed at the idea of a jaguar attacking a human being. It never entered his mind that the moaning scream, like that of a tortured soul, was merely the hunting cry of the big spotted cat. To him it was supernatural, something that could not come from a form of flesh and blood, and trembling and shaking he cowered there under his shelter with straining ears listening for a repetition of the awful sound. For a space he was tempted to arouse his sleeping comrade, but pride stopped him. The red-bearded fellow had not heard the cry, he would scoff at the story, would claim his comrade had been dreaming or had had a nightmare and would curse at being aroused, and so he kept his vigil alone, starting at each sound of crackling twig or rustling leaf, gasping when a frog plumped with a splash into the creek and shivering as he crouched beside the fire.

But the minutes passed, the cry was not repeated, the frogs and creeping things resumed their chorus

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and at last, utterly exhausted, the man threw himself upon the rough couch and slept.

With daylight the memories of the terrors of the night seemed scarcely more than a dream and, indeed, the man tried to convince himself that it had been a dream and forebore mentioning it to his companion. But all through the day, as they paddled down the creek, he was nervous. He had a strange unaccountable sensation of being followed and from time to time he glanced back, half expecting to see something—he did not, could not imagine what—behind them. So strong was this feeling that when noon came and they stopped for lunch, he insisted upon landing at a small island in the creek and as the red-bearded man had long been accustomed to obeying his chief without question, he made no comment and followed commands.

Throughout the afternoon they paddled on and again sunset found them upon the creek and they began to fear that they had lost their way, that through some error they were following the wrong water-course and that they would not reach the river by continuing. And yet they could not see how this could be. They had passed no branches or other creeks of any size, the water still flowed in the di-

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rection they were going and reasoning that it must eventually empty into a larger stream, they dismissed their fears on this score, decided that they had miscalculated the distance and the speed of their canoe and prepared to camp.

The leader, however, had no desire to repeat his terrifying experiences of the preceding night and once more he headed the canoe for a tiny islet in the stream. Leaving his companion to start the fire and prepare for the night, he followed about the shore of the island, pushed through the tangle of brush, investigated it thoroughly, and convinced that there was nothing on the place which could possibly be feared, he returned with an easier mind to the camp.

Feeling perfectly secure, he soon fell asleep beside his comrade, but his slumber was uneasy; he awoke from a fearful nightmare shaking as if with fever and tossing an armful of dry wood on the dying fire, he squatted near it. Suddenly, from a tree above his head, an owl uttered its mournful cry and so frazzled were the man's nerves that he jumped and yelled in alarm. Drowsily the red-bearded fellow opened his eyes, mumbled an oath when the other confusedly tried to explain and was soon snor-



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ing again. Ashamed of his fright at the owl, the leader threw himself down and closed his eyes, blaming his own foolishness. But though the monotonous chirping of insects and the soft gurgle of the water lulled and soothed, he found himself still straining his ears for any unusual sound and was as nervous as ever.

Once he thought he heard the sound of a cautious footstep and instantly he sprang up, cocked pistol in hand and peered anxiously into the shadows. For a brief instant he seemed to glimpse a moving, shapeless form and raising his weapon he was about to fire, but his hand shook and trembled so he could not aim. Before he could steady himself by an almost superhuman effort, there was nothing to be seen but the dark sluggishly flowing creek and the ghostly outlines of the trees.

But sleep was out of the question. For hour after hour he sat wide awake and with every sense alert until the gray dawn broke and the shadows of the night gave way to the faint morning light. Rising, he stepped towards the canoe and as he crossed the narrow strip of muddy shore between the water's edge and the fire he halted in his tracks, staring with unbelieving eyes at the ground. Plainly visible in



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the oozy soil were the imprints of naked human feet!

Some one had been there in the darkness! Some one had crept about the camp, and with fears once more aroused, but with murder in his heart, the fellow cocked his pistol and hurriedly strode about the islet. But there was no sign of a human being. No boat, no mark of a canoe having been drawn ashore; only those footprints near the fire, footprints which came from nowhere and led nowhere. As far as appearances went the being who made them might have dropped from the sky and afterwards have taken flight on wings.

All of the man's superstitions were now aroused and regardless of his companion's possible sneers and scoffings, he shook the slumbering red-bearded fellow awake and showed him the footprints. But the burly rascal gave little heed to them, declaring they were merely footprints of some Indian and might have been there for days. Swearing vociferously that he didn't see what there was about an Indian's track to cause worry anyway, he vowed that he for one would be glad to run across an Indian or an Indian village in order to get food, for unless they gained the river and managed to secure provisions

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they would be facing starvation as there were barely two days' rations remaining.

But even with this very real and pressing danger confronting them, the memory of the mysterious footprints were uppermost in the leader's mind. He was brave enough in the face of real danger; as long as tangible enemies were to be met he had nerves of steel, and he had never quailed when peril threatened. But this nerve-wracking, haunting fear of an unknown, invisible something was beyond his control and somehow he could not avoid connecting the terrible wailing cry he had heard with the strange footprints on the island. And then, just before noon, the creek widened and, through the trees ahead, the broad river came into view and a great weight seemed lifted from his mind as the dismal creek was left behind.

Just below the mouth of the creek they stopped for their midday rest on a jutting, wooded point. The meal over, the red-bearded man yawned prodigiously, vowed he was going to have a nap before going farther and lighting his pipe, threw himself down in the shade of a tree. The other, all his fears flown, now they were on the big river and with the bright sunshine all about, remarked that he would

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wander off in the hope of finding game and filling the magazine of his pistol with cartridges, he fastened the canoe securely, and puffing contentedly at his pipe strolled up the bank into the forest.

There was little undergrowth, the huge trees, with their outjutting roots and their drapery of trailing vines and lianas, stood well apart and treading softly and glancing here and there, the man walked among the trees with pistol cocked and ready.

From the lofty branches bits of falling fruit and nuts told of birds or other creatures feeding among the leaves; the hoarse yelping of toucans sounded from the foliage; occasionally, a macaw uttered its raucous scream and unseen parrots screeched and squawked. Once too, a troop of great, red, howling monkeys crashed off through the tree tops, leaping from branch to branch and uttering hoarse barks of protest at the intruder. But no creature appeared within pistol shot and at last, thoroughly disgusted and realizing that he and his comrade were wasting valuable time and should be on their way, he turned about and started to retrace his steps towards the river.

The next moment he halted in his tracks, shaking with nameless terror. His thin-lipped cruel mouth

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gaped, the ever present monocle dropped unnoticed from his eye, the hand that grasped his weapon trembled, for once again that awful, blood curdling scream had echoed through the jungle.

For a moment he stood, as though frozen to the spot, and then, thinking only to escape from the shadowy mysterious forest, to reach his companion and the canoe, he dashed forward and raced panting towards the river. Once again, and seeming close behind him, came that maniacal wail and madly he tore downstream, leaping from rock to rock, plunging to his knees through the shoal water, while from the depths of the jungle wavered and rose and fell the tiger's call with a note of triumph and mockery in its unearthly cadence.

As the terrifying sound ceased and the fear-mad man came in sight of the point, he gasped and halting stared about with unbelieving eyes. The canoe was gone!

Instantly, his unreasoning terror of the screaming cry was forgotten, for here was something real and tangible, a calamity so great it drove all superstitious fears, all imaginary dangers from his overwrought mind. He had left the boat securely fastened and he could not imagine how it had gone adrift. But the



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fact had to be faced, the only chance was to hurry down stream in the hopes that they might find the canoe stranded on a bar or point, and cursing his companion for sleeping and thus permitting the craft to drift away unnoticed, he shouted to the other at the top of his lungs. But there was no response, no answering cry, and swearing at the soundness of the fellow's sleep, he raced up the bank to arouse him by more forcible methods.

Then once again he stood staring in incredulous amazement. The red-bearded man was not there! Beside the tree his pipe was lying on the ground, the imprint of his bulky body still showed upon the soft ferns and tender leaves, but the man himself had vanished.

Then the master criminal burst out with such a torrent of abuse, oaths, curses and epithets as should have caused the very leaves to shrivel, for now he realized what had happend. It came over him in a flash, goading him into a frenzy of anger. His companion had deserted him. His nap had been but an excuse, a ruse, and taking advantage of his leader's absence, he had made off with the boat and the slender stock of food, leaving his comrade to perish there in the heart of the wilderness.



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Then, his stock of expletives and profanity exhausted, realizing the utter uselessness of raving at the empty air and with his ungovernable temper somewhat relieved, his reason returned and calmly, with determined mind, he looked the matter squarely in the face.

His case seemed utterly hopeless, but was it? Was it not possible for him to win out? Back there by the lake their predicament had seemed equally without hope. They had thought that only by a miracle could they escape and the miracle, in the form of an Indian and a canoe, had happened. And with the thought of Indians new hope surged through him. To attempt to make his way downstream over the rough and rocky shores and without food or shelter was, he knew, impossible; but there was a chance, a slender chance, that there might be an Indian camp in the vicinity. He could do without food for a day or two he felt sure, and perhaps, by summoning all his strength, all his indomitable will power to the effort, he could manage to reach an Indian village. To be sure he did not know if such existed, he had no idea in which direction to go, but even if he perished from hunger and exhaustion in the forest, it would be preferable to standing here beside the river and cursing the villain who had

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deserted him and who was now, no doubt, miles down the stream.

Possibly, he thought, he might find a trail or a path and feeling that action of any sort was better than inaction, he started into the forest, searching the ground for a trail. A moment later he uttered an exclamation of satisfaction, for there, faintly visible among the weeds and broad-leaved plants, was a narrow pathway leading inland.

Encouraged and not stopping to think that it might be a game trail leading nowhere, he stepped forward along the almost indistinguishable path. A score of paces ahead was a tangled thicket of high grass into which the trail led and hurrying along, he pressed through the herbage. The next instant a piercing cry of horror rang through the jungle, startling the birds in the tree tops and silencing the chattering monkeys.

Lying face down upon the grass, his head resting in a pool of blood, was the body of the red-bearded man pinned to the forest floor by a spear driven between his shoulder blades!

The horrified man gave a single glance at the lifeless, bleeding form and then, utterly bereft of his senses, crazed with terror of the unseen, mysterious

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assassin, he turned and dashed blindly, madly, from the spot.

Unheeding, unreasoning, he raced among the trees, stumbling over rocks, tripping on upjutting roots, ripping his clothes as he tore through thorny vines and palms, barking his shins, crashing into trees in his headlong flight, until utterly exhausted, he sank limply to the earth.

How long he lay there he did not know. Possibly he lost consciousness, possibly his half-crazed mind was incapable of judging time; but when at last he raised himself and glanced about, the sun was low in the west and new terrors filled him as he realized that he must remain in the jungle throughout the night. But his first nameless, unreasoning, mad fright had passed and while he was still weak and trembling, his mind was clear and he knew that if he ever was to escape from this dread forest he must have shelter and a fire. Near him a huge mora tree spread twenty-feet, slablike, buttressed roots and between two of these he would be somewhat protected. Gathering a quantity of dead branches and twigs, he piled them near the tree and after a few futile attempts had a roaring fire going. He was desperately hungry, but food was out of the question,

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and seated between the mora roots in the grateful warmth of the blaze, he steeled himself to withstand the gnawing pangs of his famished stomach.

Presently there was a scratching sound above him, a bit of bark dropped upon his head and glancing quickly up he saw a squirrel clinging to the trunk of the tree and gazing wonderingly at the intruder. Quickly raising his pistol and taking careful aim, the man fired and at the echoing report, the little creature dropped lifeless at his feet. Quickly he skinned and cleaned the animal and ere the flesh was cold had spitted it on a pointed stick and was broiling it over the fire. It was a pitifully small morsel for a hungry, tired man, but it was far better than nothing and ravenously he devoured the half-cooked, blackened flesh. And as he did so the thin lips smiled and a look of satisfaction spread across his features. If he could kill one squirrel he could kill more—or perhaps larger game. He had learned a lesson of the bush; he had discovered that by sitting motionless the wild things could be found more readily than by moving about. He vowed that he would yet win out, that he would escape and would reach civilization despite fate and his enemies.

With his hunger somewhat appeased he leaned back



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against the mora roots and mentally determining that he would not again give way to craven fear, he strove to dismiss the thoughts of the spear-pierced body of his dead companion.

But he could not forget it, could not drive it from his mind, and despite every effort he found himself dwelling on the subject, wondering how and by whom the red-bearded giant had been killed. That it was the work of Indians he knew—the spear thrust through the body proved that—and he felt that the redskins who had done the deed had also taken the boat. Perhaps, he thought, that was it, possibly the Indians had followed them to recover their craft and surprising the white man asleep had murdered him. But if so, why was he not lying dead beneath the tree where he had been sleeping? How did his body happen to be some distance away in the thicket? It was a puzzle, a mystery. The fact that “red-beard” was dead did not trouble him, or at least it would not have troubled him had he possessed the canoe. Rather it would have been welcome, for it would have meant more food for himself. He had seen and dealt out swift and sudden death too often to feel the ordinary man’s horror of murder or a dead body, but for some unaccountable reason this was



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different. There was something strange, something mysterious about it and then there were the nervous, groundless fears he had endured while they had been upon the creek.

This brought to mind the awful screams he had heard and he shivered as he thought of them, but there were no unusual sounds in the forest now, all seemed peaceful and at last he dropped into a deep sleep.

With morning came hunger and bearing in mind the squirrel of the previous evening, he peered about, searching for some other creature to kill. At last, with a gleam of almost savage satisfaction, he saw a plump, long-legged black and gray bird stepping daintily among the trees and with another lucky shot secured it. He now felt sure that he would not starve and having cleaned, picked and broiled the trumpet bird, he rose, stretched himself, adjusted his monocle, which by some miracle had escaped destruction in his mad flight, and glanced about.

Then, for the first time, he realized that he did not know in which direction the river lay. With the discovery he cursed vociferously in his native German and then burst into a mirthless laugh. After all, it made little difference. He was gambling on

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chance, on the faint hope of finding an Indian village, and, as far as he could tell, one direction was as promising as another and so, scanning the earth in the hope that he might find a trail, he walked from his temporary resting place through the forest.

A few hours later he came upon a small brook or creek and, knowing that if he followed this he must eventually come out somewhere, and finding the bed of the stream an easier road than the jungle floor with the cool water comforting to his blistered, aching feet, he splashed along ankle deep in the stream.

He had wisely refrained from devouring all of the trumpet bird and now, feeling hungry and seeing nothing to shoot, he seated himself on a fallen tree and munched the bird's drumsticks. Throughout the afternoon he tramped on, forcing himself forward by sheer will power, for he was exhausted by the tramp, his feet were swollen and sore, he was half starved and his skin was scratched, bruised, barked and bitten by insects. Then, when he felt that he could go no farther, that perhaps after all the best thing to do would be to put a bullet through his own head, he smelled smoke. There was no question of it, he sniffed the air and knew that near at hand was a fire, that he was close to a camp or

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hut, that there were fellow men not far away and, leaving the stream and following the scent of pungent wood smoke, he hurried onwards.

Stronger and stronger became the odor. Now he could see the faint bluish haze among the trees and feeling that he was saved, that food and help were near, he hurried forward. A moment later he saw the fire, a smouldering pile of branches, and with a despairing cry he flung himself down. The fire was his own! Close to it were the great mora roots where he had spent the night; all about were scattered the feathers of the trumpet bird. He had traveled in a circle, had come back to his starting point and all that heartbreaking, terrible tramp had been for nothing!

Utterly done up, thoroughly discouraged, feeling that he could do no more, he lay there striving to summon sufficient courage to place his pistol at his ear and pull the trigger. Then to his dulling senses, came the sound of a stealthy footfall and roused to sudden interest, he raised his head, glanced about and cocked his pistol as he did so. And at the sight which met his eyes, he was galvanized into life and action. Within ten feet of where he lay, crouched a hideous, terrifying apparition, a

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figure red as blood from whose chest glared two huge, painted eyes and a fang-filled mouth, a figure whose matted tangled hair framed a face demoniacal in his expression of mingled hate and fury and whose upraised hand grasped a heavy, hardwood club.

With a yell that rang through the forest, the white man whirled and throwing up his pistol pulled the trigger. But at the same instant the avenger leaped like his tiger namesake, the bullet whistled harmlessly past his head, the club descended and his victim sank with a moan. With the savage, terrible cry of the jaguar gloating over its kill, the Indian stood above the huddled motionless form, fierce eyes watching for the slightest movement, club upraised.

Then suddenly, he turned, listening intently, as to his keen ears came unexpected sounds, the noise of a boat's keel grating on rock and the shouts of men.

For a brief instant the avenger hesitated, then with a bound he vanished in the shadows and from the depths of the forest came his mocking, triumphant cry—the bloodcurdling, awesome wail of the jaguar. He had accomplished his purpose. His murdered tribesman was avenged.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE END OF THE TRAIL

**F**OR some time after their precipitate departure from the spot where the red-bearded man's body had been found, those in the boat remained silent.

The Indians, frightened and with all their primitive superstitions aroused, plied their paddles and glanced fearfully first at one shore and then at the other, but uttered no words. Colcord, half Indian as he was, shared his copper-skinned companions' terror to some extent and kept the boat in mid-stream, swinging her wide of each point and islet. The boys, still shuddering at the horrible sight they had seen, were subdued and too much impressed to talk; Mr. Pauling, Mr. Henderson and the explorer were deep in thought and even the irrepressible Rawlins had no comment to make in the face of this awful tragedy.

But as the point where lay the gruesome remains of what had once been the red-bearded giant was left



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behind and the trees hid the circling birds of ill omen from sight, the spirits of those in the boat revived and their thoughts turned to the future and what might lie ahead of them. There was now but one man to search for, the chase had narrowed down, but this very fact added to their problems and reduced their chances of success.

"As you remarked, Rawlins, I would like to know where the other man is," said Mr. Pauling, breaking the silence. "There's a deep mystery here."

"I'll say there is!" assented the diver, "but the whole thing's been one darned mystery after another, ever since the boys first heard those signals back in New York."

"Yes and they've usually solved themselves as they arose," Mr. Henderson reminded him. "But it looks as if this one would never be solved. I'm afraid the answer died with that chap back there in the bush."

"And I'm afraid we'll never set eyes on the chief of the rascally gang," declared Mr. Pauling. "I expect he's come to a violent end also."

"What puzzles me," said Mr. Thorne, "is why they left their plane and how they became separated. Of course, there's a chance that they wrecked their

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machine in landing or that some accident happened to it later or perhaps they tried to fly away and came a cropper, but even then it seems natural that the men should have remained together."

"Perhaps they were," suggested Mr. Pauling. "Isn't it possible that they were attacked and one was killed while the other escaped?"

"No, I hardly think so," replied Mr. Thorne. "The avenger never attacks a victim openly—the very nature of his vengeance precludes that. His only weapon is a short club or his bare hands and he'd have no chance against a well-armed man and still less against two. No, he invariably sneaks upon his victim while the latter sleeps or is off his guard."

"But are you sure that fellow was killed by a Kenaima?" asked Mr. Henderson. "Isn't it possible they had a quarrel with the Indians and that he was struck down and his comrade taken prisoner or carried off wounded?"

The explorer shook his head. "There are no hostile Indians in Guiana," he averred. "They are all peaceable and would never dream of quarreling with white men, no matter how great the provocation. Besides, there's not the least doubt that he was the victim of Kenaima—the wooden spear through his

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body proves that—and there was no sign of a struggle. No, that man killed an Indian and thereby sealed his own doom. It's quite possible that his companion was innocent and was not included in the Kenaima and hence was unharmed, but if so, where can he be?"

"I'll bet old Red-whiskers deserted his bunkie and skipped off," declared Rawlins. "Then he did up a Buck and got what was coming to him. Let's beat it for the plane—maybe the Grand Panjandrum's still over there waiting for his mate to come back."

"By Jove! that's a possible solution to the puzzle," exclaimed Mr. Pauling, "and even if he did not desert he may have gone off on a hunt and while away killed an Indian. Yes, I think we'll find the answer at the plane—if we can find it."

"It's a plausible theory," admitted Mr. Henderson. "But there's a flaw in it. How did the victim of the Kenaima cross this river? Mr. Thorne says Maipurisi is to the east and as far as we know the fellows had no boat."

"Hmm, that's true," mused Mr. Pauling. "Looks as if we're up against another mystery."

"Perhaps they carried a folding boat or found an Indian canoe," suggested Tom.

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"Yes, that's possible," agreed his father, "but whatever the explanation our best plan is to go to the plane at once. How far are we from Maipurisi, Thorne?"

"A good long day's paddle," replied the explorer. "Taguma Creek flows from the lake and empties into this river about three miles above here. We might make the lake by to-morrow noon."

"Well, whatever's happened has happened within the past four days," declared Rawlins. "They were there and talking by radio then. How long should you think that man had been dead?"

"Impossible to say," replied Mr. Thorne. "Probably not over two days. If he'd been there longer than that, there would have been nothing but bones left."

"Gosh! the last time they talked they were asking for help," cried Frank. "Perhaps the Kenaima was after them then."

"You're right!" ejaculated Mr. Pauling. "That must have been it. They knew their danger and probably tried to escape. But why didn't they get off in their plane?"

"Search me!" said Rawlins. "Let's get hold of old Monocle Eye and ask him!"

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Suddenly Colcord bent forward, shaded his eyes with his hand and gazed ahead. "They's a coorial yander!" he announced.

Instantly all turned and peered forward to where, barely visible among some rocks, they could now see a dug-out canoe apparently deserted.

"Run over and let's have a look at it," Mr. Thorne commanded the captain.

Swinging his big steering paddle and with a word to the Indians, the Boviander turned the boat from its course and headed for the little derelict.

As they drew near, they saw that it was drawn upon a ledge and was secured to the rocks and so placed that it was completely hidden from view except when approached from downstream.

"Odd!" ejaculated Mr. Thorne. "Some one left it here, but where can they be? This little pile of rocks wouldn't concea! a rabbit and it's fifty yards from shore. Funny place to leave a boat."

The next moment they were alongside and as Rawlins leaned over and peered into the craft, he uttered a surprised exclamation. "By glory, it's theirs!"

"Jove, you're right!" affirmed Mr. Pauling.

There was no doubt of it. In the canoe was a Luger pistol, a cartridge belt, a few cans of food, a



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short-handled ax and a roll of kahki-colored cloth.

Rawlins leaped into the coorial and examined the various articles.

"Now what the dickens do you suppose they left their pistol for?" he cried as he picked up the weapon. "And they were off for a trip too—took grub along and a tent. Hello! Their plane's done for! Look here! This cloth's the covering of one of her wings!"

"I'll be hanged!" exploded Mr. Henderson. "Then they had deserted the machine and were getting off in this canoe. They can't be far away!"

Rawlins laughed. "I'll say one of 'em's a blamed long ways off!" he cried. "But the other chap may be hanging about. Great Scott, he may be watching us from shore now!"

At the diver's words every one started and glanced at the forest-covered banks as if half expecting to see the leader of the "reds" peering at them from the foliage. Then Sam, who had been holding to the rail of the canoe, leaned over and reaching into the bottom of the craft picked up some object and examined it.

"Tha's a cur'ous-lookin' feather, Chief," he remarked, handing his find to Mr. Pauling.

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"Hmm, 'tis odd," agreed the latter. "Guess they must have killed some bird."

Joseph, who was seated next to Sam, had turned and as he saw the soft, curled black plume his eyes seemed about to pop from his head, his mouth gaped and in a gasping whisper, he exclaimed, "Kenaima!"

"What's that?" demanded Mr. Thorne, as with one accord every Indian wheeled about and sat staring with frightened eyes at the innocent black feather in Mr. Pauling's hand. "How you sabby him Kenaima, Joseph?"

"Me sabby too much!" stammered the terrified Indian. "No likeum, must for makeum walk plenty quick this place!"

"What does he mean?" asked Tom who could see nothing in the little feather to cause such excitement and terror in the Indians.

"He means that feather came from the Kenaima," replied the explorer, "and I'll swear he's right. The avenger always wears a girdle or mantle of black Powi feathers—the Indians believe they are magic and render the wearer invisible—and this feather is from a Powi and has been used in a cape or girdle. You can see where the quill has been split and strip-

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ped—the way the Indians always prepare them when making feather ornaments.”

“Then the Kenaima’s been here!” exclaimed Frank. “Uugh, let’s get out of here.”

“Not till we get at the bottom of all this,” declared Mr. Pauling decisively. “If these fool Indians are frightened by their superstitions, I’m not and they’ll have to get over it, Kenaima or no Kenaima.”

The Indians were now jabbering excitedly in low tones and Mr. Thorne was doing his utmost to quiet them and allay their terror.

“No makeum ’fraid!” he admonished them. “This fellow Kenaima long time gone. You sabby him no makeum Kenaima for Buckman. Him killum white fellow like so! Him makeum gone topside same way. This fellow Mr. Pauling good frien’ Kenaima, him want killum bad white fellow all same Kenaima. Him gotum plenty peai—plenty peai. Must for no makeum ’fraid. Must for do all same him tellum.”

Somewhat reassured and quite willing to believe—after having witnessed and heard the radio messages—that Mr. Pauling and his friends had “plenty peai,” and seeing no reason why a white man should not be traveling into the bush on a little “Kenaima” of his

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own, the Indians quieted down, although they looked askance at the innocent feather and breathed a sigh of relief as Mr. Pauling tucked it into his pocket.

"What do you make of it, Thorne?" he asked. "You're the only one who knows the bush and the Indians. How do you account for this boat with the rascals' property in it, being moored here in mid-stream and with a feather—which these Indians claim is from the Kenaima—in it also?"

"I can't account for it," replied the explorer, "but I *can* offer a theory. It is quite possible that the Kenaima trailed the men, that he saw them land here and that he examined their boat after they had left and dropped one of his feathers. Or again he may purposely have placed the feather here as a token that he was on their trail—not stopping to realize that it would mean nothing to them."

"Hmm, but why should they land here and how did that red-bearded rascal get miles below here to be killed?" queried the other.

"That baffles me," admitted Mr. Thorne. "And the fact that the pistol is here adds to the mystery. If they started out to hunt, or went ashore for any purpose, it seems unreasonable to think they would not carry their weapons."

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"Well, we know it's no use going on to Maipurisi and trying to find their plane," declared Mr. Henderson. "It seems to me we've come to the end of the trail and might as well go back. Wherever the other villain is, it's hopeless to try to locate him."

"I'll say it's not!" contradicted Rawlins. "He'll come back to his boat and we can lie low and nab him when he does."

"Provided he lives and hasn't seen us, perhaps," said Mr. Pauling.

"Well, I've a hunch he's not dead and he can't go on without a boat or grub," argued the diver. "I vote we sneak in somewhere and hide and wait. If he don't come back by dark we won't be any worse off than we are now."

"We might as well try that scheme," agreed Mr. Thorne. "He may be off in the bush hunting for his comrade and if he hasn't seen us, he'll return in time as Mr. Rawlins says."

"Very well," assented Mr. Pauling. "I'll try anything once and it's our last chance."

Accordingly, the explorer explained to Colcord what was wanted and the Boviander, after a few words with the Indians and peering about at the shores of the river, swung the boat clear and, rounding the tiny



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rocky islet, headed for a dark and shadowy creek that emptied into the river several hundred yards upstream.

They had proceeded but a short distance when one of the Indians turned and said something to Colcord in the Akawoia tongue. Instantly, the Boviander sniffed the air and muttered a reply.

"What's up, Colcord?" demanded Mr. Thorne.

"They's a fire here 'bout," replied the captain. "Don' you smell him?"

"Yes, I believe I do!" exclaimed the explorer also sniffing. "Cautiously, Colcord—if there's a fire there must be men. We may be close to our quarry. Go silently and we may surprise him."

At the surprising news that there was a camp fire near, every one grew tense with excitement and expectancy, for while there was a chance that it might prove to be an Indian encampment, yet there was also a chance—and a very promising one—that it might be the fire of the fugitive they sought. Moreover, even were it an Indian's fire the man they were hunting might be there and silently they waited as with noiseless strokes of their paddles the Indians urged the boat towards the bank, following the scent

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of pungent smoke as unerringly as hounds on the trail.

They had almost reached the rocky shores and, with weapons ready, the men were preparing to leap ashore and dash into the forest towards the thin wisp of blue haze that was now visible among the trees, when from the jungle ahead, the sharp report of a pistol rang out. So totally unexpected and startling was the sound that even the stolid Indians uttered cries of alarm and surprise.

"By glory, he's seen us!" exclaimed Rawlins. "Missed us though—come on! Over the top, boys! We'll—"

His words died on his lips as from the dark forest came a quavering, blood-curdling scream; an unearthly awful sound.

"What in blazes is that?" cried Rawlins, as the boat grated on the rocks and he sprang ashore.

"Jaguar!" snapped out Mr. Thorne. "He must have fired at the beast! Come on!"

But before he could leap onto the rocks the Indians had seized their paddles and with terrified cries of "Kenaima! Kenaima!" were struggling madly to push the boat from shore.

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"Stop that!" commanded Mr. Thorne. "No makeum fool!"

But his orders were unheeded, the Indians were panic stricken. The next second Sam had leaped forward and with his huge black hands was cuffing the cowering Indians right and left. Wrenching the paddles from their grasps he heaved them onto the beach. Almost before the others realized what had happened, the Bahaman sprang onto the rocks, the boat's painter in one hand and his paddle in the other.

"Ah guess he won' humbug yo' no more," he announced grinning. "Yo' go 'long, Chief. Ah'll ten' to these boys!"

"I'll say you will!" cried Rawlins and realizing that Sam was perfectly capable of "tending" to the Indians and the boat, he dashed up the bank followed by the others.

As the diver reached the first trees, the jaguar's cry again came from the jungle, but faint and far away, and the next moment Rawlins uttered a shout.

"Here he is!" he yelled as with drawn revolver he leaped towards a smoldering fire. "But by glory, I guess the jaguar's beat us to it!"

Huddled near the fire was a ragged, human form. As the diver and the others bent over the body, they

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knew that their search was over, for instantly all recognized it as that of the master criminal they sought. Dangling from its string was a cracked monocle; a German automatic pistol was lying by the outstretched hand, and blood was oozing from a great gash across the back of the man's head.

"It's he!" exclaimed Mr. Henderson. "But Rawlins' is right—that jaguar finished him."

Mr. Pauling had torn open the fellow's tattered garments and was listening at his chest. "He's not dead!" he announced. "Just knocked out. Hurry up, get the first aid kit and fix up his wound. He may live to answer for his crimes yet."

Mr. Thorne had been examining the ground about the unconscious man and as Tom and Frank rushed back to the boat for the first aid kit, he stooped and examined the bloody wound on the man's head.

"You're dead wrong about one thing," he announced in grave tones. "No jaguar made that gash—and there's not a sign of a jaguar about."

"I'll say there was!" declared Rawlins. "By glory! Didn't we hear him yell?"

The explorer smiled. "That was no jaguar," he replied positively. "I'm not surprised the Indians

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were terrified. This man was struck down by the Kenaima!"

"What!" ejaculated Mr. Pauling, looking up in amazement. "You mean to say—"

"That we arrived in the nick of time to save this rascal from the fate of his red-bearded friend," declared the explorer. "The avenger crept upon him and struck him down, but was undoubtedly frightened off by hearing us approach—remember he cannot be seen by human beings until his mission is accomplished—and he had no time to finish his job."

"By glory, you're right!" exclaimed the diver who had been examining the earth while Mr. Thorne spoke. "There's a trail of bare feet leading away from here, but nary a track of a big cat."

"Well my thanks to the Kenaima," remarked Mr. Pauling. "I guess you hit nearer the mark than you thought when you said he was 'plenty good fren' of ours. But I'm mighty glad he didn't finish this chap off. Dead men tell no tales and I've hopes this rascal will live to tell a lot."

"Well, I'm sorry for that poor devil of a Kenaima lad," declared Rawlins. "According to Hoyle, as you might say, he'll have to go on bumping people off indefinitely as long as he didn't run a



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stick through the old High Muck a Muck here.”

Mr. Thorne chuckled. “I don’t think you need worry over him,” he responded. “I expect he’ll consider that as long as he did a good job with the other victim, he’s fulfilled the spirit if not the letter of the law. But I’d like to know what these two rascals did to bring the Kenaima after them.”

“I’ll say they did a plenty!” said Rawlins. “Leave it to them to do dirty work—even if they’re in an uninhabited jungle.”

“Well they won’t do any more,” averred Mr. Pauling who, with the others’ assistance, was dressing and bandaging the man’s wound. “If we get him out of the bush alive, he’ll rue the day he ever went into the jungle.”

At last all that could be done was accomplished and the still unconscious man was lifted to an improvised stretcher and carried to the boat. The Indians were still sullen and Colcord wore a scowl, his spirits evidently ruffled, as he carried on a wordy argument with Sam who stood guard, holding the rope with one big fist and a threatening paddle with the other.

Placing the wounded man on his stretcher beneath the arched awning in the stern of the boat, Mr. Paul-

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ing called the Bahaman aboard, the explorer ordered the Boviander to push off, and the Indians, vastly relieved at being able to get clear of the spot, seized their paddles and swung the big coorial into the stream.

"I suppose it's 'home James,' now," remarked Rawlins. "We've got the goods—even if they are damaged, and by glory, I'm dead sorry it's all over but the shouting."

"So am I," declared Tom. "Gosh, it's hard to believe the excitement's over and the man we've been after so long is really captured."

"Gee, yes, and isn't it too bad we can't radio to Colonel Maidley that we've got him?" put in Frank. "I wish we had our sending set here."

"Jehoshaphat!" ejaculated Tom, a sudden idea coming to him. "Perhaps we'll have some excitement yet—I'd forgotten about the loot. Perhaps this fellow'll tell us where 'tis."

"Little chance of that," declared his father. "He'd die with the secret, just to baffle us. Hello, he's coming to! I'm sorry to do it, but we'll have to put irons on him, Henderson. No knowing what he may do when he finds himself here."

"Yes, it seems inhuman to manacle an injured

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man," agreed Mr. Henderson as he rummaged in his kit bag and got out handcuffs. "But we can't afford to take chances. He'd drown himself in a moment rather than go to trial. But we'll be as merciful as we can. Just lock one wrist and ankle."

An instant later the steel rings snapped about one of the man's wrists and an ankle and Mr. Henderson snapped the others to the boat's timbers. A few minutes after he had been thus secured, the fellow opened his eyes and looked about; but there was no sign of recognition in his glance, and mumbling a few incoherent words he again closed his eyes. Mr. Pauling poured a glass of water and put it to the fellow's lips and he gulped it down eagerly, but said nothing.

"Off his bean a bit yet," commented Rawlins, "and I'm not surprised. That was an almighty wallop he got."

"Possibly he may never regain his senses," said Mr. Pauling. "It will be a mercy for him if he doesn't." Then, glancing about, he exclaimed, "Here, where are we going? Have them swing this boat around, Thorne."

"Aren't you starting back?" inquired the explorer in surprise.

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"Not yet," declared Mr. Pauling. "I want to see that plane. We've got to have all the evidence we can get and I've an idea some may be there."

"Hurrah!" cried Tom. "Then it's not all over yet."

Meanwhile the boat had been swung and once more was being paddled upstream, but Colcord and the Indians kept it as far as possible from the western bank and hugged the eastern shores. Two hours later they reached the mouth of a wide, dark creek and leaving the big river, paddled rapidly along the black and silent waterway into the very heart of the jungle. Once, as they passed a small island, the Boviander drew Mr. Thorne's attention to a pile of charred and blackened sticks a few yards from the beach and remarked that some one had camped there recently.

"Hmm, I expect that's where these precious scoundrels stopped on the way out from Maipurisi," said the explorer. "That looks as if we were right in our conjectures as to the location of the plane. By the way, Colcord, did the Indians recognize that canoe we found? Do they know what tribe it belonged to."

"They say it Akuria, Chief," replied the Boviander.

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"Akurias have plenty big camp topside Maipurisi."

"Then that settles it," declared Mr. Thorne. "They landed in Maipurisi and got their coorial from the Akuria village. Speed her up, Colcord, the sooner we get there the sooner you'll be back to Wismar."

But there was no chance of making the lake by nightfall and camp was made beside the creek. Strangely enough the Indians appeared to have completely overcome their fears of the Kenaima and worked as willingly and were as light-hearted as ever.

The wounded man was conscious, but appeared utterly oblivious to his surroundings and uttered no word. He ate the food which Sam fed to him, but he was evidently partly paralyzed and moved himself with an effort, not making any attempt to even lift his hands or arms.

"I'm rather glad of that," said Mr. Pauling in a low tone. "He doesn't realize he's manacled and he doesn't know yet that he's a prisoner. It makes me feel a brute to keep him locked that way and if he continues as he is, I shall free him. No danger of his making a break as long as he cannot move a finger."



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"Well, I don't know," remarked Rawlins who had been watching the man closely. "He's a slippery duck as you know and I've a hunch he knows a heap more than you think and isn't as helpless as he'd have you believe. I've caught him looking at your back in a darned nasty way. He may be nutty, but by glory, a nutty murderer's as dangerous as a sane one. I'd keep the bracelets on him if I were you."

"I think Rawlins is right," agreed Mr. Henderson. "Even if he is helpless and not himself, you can't tell at what moment he may recover and we'd better be on the safe side."

"Perhaps you're both right," acknowledged Mr. Pauling. "After all, I don't suppose he's worthy of much consideration."

Throughout the night, some one was constantly on watch beside the wounded man, but he made no move, seemed to sleep well and in the morning was in exactly the same condition as before.

Before noon the canoe emerged from the creek onto a small lake and Mr. Thorne announced that they had reached their journey's end.

"The plane may be anywhere along shore," he said. "We'll have to skirt around and hunt for it."

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But the lake's small and we should have little trouble."

With all eyes searching each indentation and cove in the forest-clad shores, the coorial was paddled around the southern borders of the lake and before they had covered half its circumference, Tom gave a shout of triumph. "There 'tis!" he cried. "In that little bay."

"Right you are!" affirmed the explorer. "Pretty bad wreck though."

A minute later the boat was run ashore beside the dismantled plane and all scrambled out to examine it.

"Hurrah!" yelled Frank who had caught sight of the "reds," camp and the radio instruments. "Now we can send a message to Colonel Maidley."

"Righto!" agreed Mr. Pauling. "Get it off. No need of cipher now."

Quickly adjusting the instruments, the boys called the government station at Georgetown and ticked off the message telling of their success and the fact that they had captured the long-sought ringleader of the gang. Then, telling Sam to load the instruments into the boat, they joined the others who were examining and searching the plane. There was little

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to be found, however. The hull was filled with water, but the nine Indians with the Boviander's help dragged the plane high and dry and, the water having drained off, Mr. Pauling and his friends removed everything within. Then they searched for possible secret lockers or compartments and were busy at this when Sam approached.

Touching Mr. Pauling on the sleeve, he drew him to one side. "Tha' man he mek to watch yo'," he announced in low tones. "Ah was puttin' tha' in-s'ments abo'd an' Ah looks up an' see he liftin' he haid an' tryin' fo' see what yo' doin'. An, Chief, he move he han's O. K. Ah sees he clutch he fis's an' Ah knows he was cursin' under he breath. Ah's pos'tive he's jus' playin' possum, Chief."

"Hmm," mused Mr. Pauling. "Well, you stay there and keep a strict guard over him, Sam. Thank you for telling me."

"Didn't I say so?" exclaimed the diver when Mr. Pauling repeated Sam's information. "He'll bear watching all right."

"Well, I think we may as well leave," declared Mr. Henderson. "There's nothing more of interest here—only water-soaked provisions, extra clothes and—by Jove! what's this?"

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As he spoke he had tossed a sodden coat onto the shore and as he did so a dark leather wallet or bill book had dropped from a pocket. Stooping quickly, he picked it up and opened it while the others gathered close about. Within were bank notes of large denominations, a few letters absolutely illegible from the water and a larger folded sheet of tough parchmentlike paper. Carefully, Mr. Henderson unfolded it and glanced at it.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed. "It's a chart."

"I'll say it is!" cried Rawlins. "And of the West Indies! By the great horn spoon, now we've got 'em dead to rights!"

"Gosh, perhaps it's a map of where they hid their loot!" cried Tom excitedly.

"And we can go and get it!" put in Frank.

"I'll say 'tis and we can!" yelled Rawlins. "It's all over but the shouting! Come on, let's beat it for Georgetown with this duck and then hike after their loot! This bush work may be all right, but me for the ocean. I'm itching to get under water again. By glory, treasure hunting's my middle name!"

Mr. Pauling laughed. "I had an idea that hunches were," he chuckled. "But come on. Nothing more

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to keep us here and it's mainly your hunches, Rawlins, that have carried us through."

"Not a bit of it," declared the diver. "You'll have to thank the radio detectives for that. I'd never have had any hunches if it hadn't been for them."

A few minutes later the lonely jungle lake had been left behind. The boat sped down the creek towards the great river, while the Indians' rousing, homeward bound chantey startled the screeching parrots from the tree tops. A monkey crept curiously from his hiding place and gazed quizzically at the deserted seaplane. Beside a jungle stream an Indian washed the painted eyes and grinning fang-filled mouth from his chest and smiled contentedly and with grim satisfaction as he thought of how well his tribesman had been avenged. The long search which had carried Mr. Pauling and his friends so far and into such strange places was over. Their mission had been accomplished. The radio detectives had done their part, the arch criminal was a prisoner; they had come to the end of the trail and now only the plunging, swirling, thrilling rush down the great river and through the churning rapids lay between them and civilization.

THE END







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